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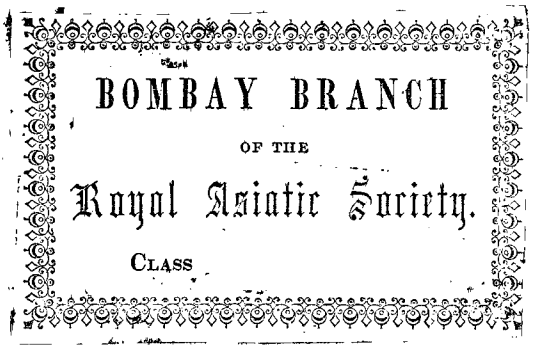

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DIARY OF AN IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

VOL. II.

DIARY OF

AN IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

By FRANCES ELLIOT.

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ac.

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DIARY OF

AN IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

I.

The Forum by Day—The Coliseum—Golden House of Nero and the Games of the Amphitheatre.

CONGREVE makes one of his *dramatis personæ* declare "that his name is Truth, and that he has very few acquaintances." Had I lived nearer his time I should have thought he had an eye to me, for I have all my life steadfastly proposed to tell the truth, and have rendered myself unaccountably unpopular by so doing. I also propose to tell the truth in this rough Diary—its only merit. I will not admire a statue because Winckelman praises it, or fall into raptures over tottering walls and clumsy pillars because they bear high-sounding names. In my character of truth-teller I propose to visit the Forum. Now, I am certain that no human being ever visited that far-famed valley of glory and misery, *or the first time,* without positive

disappointment such as I felt; only people will fly into high-flown classical raptures—raptures in which, indeed, I would willingly join, were association *alone* the question. But the Forum in broad daylight is in reality a bare, dusty, bald-looking place, with very little to see *at all*, so entirely are all vestiges of its former magnificence destroyed. The Capitoline Hill, crowned by the modern Campidoglio, built over the remains of the Tabularium, stands on a gentle eminence, and presents all the incongruities attendant on the back of an unfinished building. The windows and the walls might belong to any other house, and be considered rather untidy and incomplete; and the small bell-tower in the centre of the roof would appropriately crown a Dissenting meeting-house. Below, among the foundations, yawn some arches formed of uncemented blocks, and solid masses of stone-work in deep-down pits, of which there is just sufficient to recall their fabulous antiquity, and to remind us that in those vaults were religiously preserved the Sibylline books, consulted when there was "anything rotten in the state" of Rome.

Very much below the modern road crossing the Forum, on which I take my stand, deep excavations under the base of the hill display the remains of various temples, masses of stone, former foundations,

capitals, and broken marble pillars, crowded heterogeneously about the still remaining upright pillars, of which there are not a dozen standing, and those, to the eye of a rationalist, piled in such confusion, that, without the aid of books and antiquarian theories, it would be impossible to trace out any imaginable disposition or arrangement. No spot in the world has so fruitfully employed the learned pens of antiquarians; and because it is a Sphinx-riddle no god will reveal, everybody, with equal reason, calls them by a new name—Canina, Murray, Niebuhr, Braun, all employ their own nomenclature—which imposes the scandal of endless *aliases* on the venerable ruins. At first I was so confused that I never called them by any name; for I was sure to be wrong whatever I said, and to stand corrected, though I might, had I loved disputations, have held my ground, having made antiquity my constant study since arriving in Rome.

These temples, then, which must have stood inconveniently close together, are a vexation and a confusion. To the left, on the Tarpeian Rock, where once stood the citadel and the temple of Juno Moneta, houses and courts, dirty, black, and filthy, crowd upon each other. The republican government of ancient Rome, after the stern sentence passed on Manlius, razed his house, and forbade that henceforth any private

dwelling should be erected on the Capitol or the citadel. But the long course of ages appears to have weakened this decree; for a fashionable antiquarian once arranged a little roost on the forbidden ground, under the shadow of the Prussian eagle, whose embassy is also perched precisely on the site of the ancient citadel on the Tarpeian Rock. No rock, however, is to be seen. The elevation is very slight, save on one side (overlooking the Piazza del Torre di Specchio), "the Traitor's Leap," where a man might still break his ankle-bone perhaps if he tried, and certainly would die of the suffocating atmosphere and bad smells of the neighbourhood. A steep road descends on this side into the Forum; a valley, oblong in shape, extending about seven hundred and fifty feet; and on the further side of the Campidoglio a flight of steps also leads downwards.

Beyond the Campidoglio a further rise, corresponding with the opposite elevation of the citadel, indicates the site of the once famous temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, now replaced by the formless and really hideous exterior of the church of the Ara Cœli, a mass of browned stones, like an architectural chaos, "without form and void;" but the accumulated earth still faithfully evidences where once stood the magnificent temple. Descending the flight of steps towards the Forum, the

Arch of Septimus Severus is passed, a perfect and striking monument covered with basso-relievi, and bearing an inscription, where the name of Geta is plainly wanting, having been erased by the fratricide Caracalla, after he became emperor. Standing as it does, however, in an excavation, on a level with the temples, the arch is so low and deeply sunk that it appears utterly shorn of its just proportions and dignity. Beneath, and passing through it, some large blocks of stone, once forming part of the Clivus Capitolinus, are still visible. The position of the Forum is indicated by a large square excavation, more remarkable for its filth than for the minute remains of broken columns visible—remains conveying neither dignity nor interest to the uninformed eye. Another and a smaller excavation, strewed with fragments of capitals, blocks of marble, and the remains of a few more pillars, includes *all* pertaining to the Forum and Comitium now visible; and it is by means of books alone, and deep research and antiquarian knowledge, aided by strong powers of imagination, that we can build up these arcades, reconstruct these temples, and lend form, symmetry, and splendour to a scene positively repulsive in its actual appearance. Nothing can be more modern than the general aspect of the buildings—mostly churches—erected on the traditionary sites of the pagan temples bordering the sides of

the Forum. The modern Romans seemed to have proposed to themselves in their erection to wage the most determined war against any stray memories which might be evoked by the least vestige of ancient remains. Walls, pillars, and porticoes are ruthlessly built into the present structures, themselves as commonplace and uninteresting in whitewash and stucco as can possibly be conceived.

Proceeding along what was once the "Sacred Way," now a very dusty modern road, first in order appears the church of San Giuseppe of the Carpenters, its façade gaily painted with coarse frescoes. It is built over the Mamertine prisons; but, as I have already spoken of these curious vaults, I will not again revert to them.

Next comes the church of Santa Martina, which I have also mentioned as connected with the Accademia di San Luca. It is said to be built on the spot where once stood a temple to Mars, or, as some say, the "Secretarium Senatus." Martina, a noble Roman virgin who heroically sacrificed her life to the Christian faith, now triumphs in death within a richly-decorated tomb, in her subterranean church at the foot of that Capitol whose steps her ancestors so often mounted as conquerors, senators, and priests.

The adjoining church of San Adriano is supposed to mark the site of the Basilica Æmilia, built in the time

of Augustus: a portion of the front, formed of bricks, is all that remains.

Immediately following is the church of SS. Cosimo e Damiano, twin brothers, born in Arabia, who finally suffered martyrdom under Diocletian after twice miraculously escaping from the sea and the stake. These brothers were canonised, as it would seem, by the Catholic Church, to recall the popular worship of Romulus and Remus (on whose ruined temple the church was erected) under a Christian aspect. The magnificent mosaic of the apsis—one of the most perfect in the world—divides attention with the remnants of the original temple, now consecrated as a second and subterraneous church.

The church of San Lorenzo in Miranda is faced by an ancient portico composed of ten imposing though much injured Corinthian columns, now deprived of half their original height, and unmercifully squeezed by the façade of the insignificant modern church, bearing on a frieze an inscription showing the ancient temple to have been dedicated to the "divine Antoninus and Faustina." This portico was excavated during the visit of the Emperor Charles V. to Rome.

Standing somewhat back from the line we have hitherto followed are the three huge arches of an immense ruin formerly known as the Temple of

Peace. Many descriptions have come down to us of this stately monument. The roof was incrusted with gilt bronze, and supported by stupendous columns; the interior was enriched with the finest statues and pictures of the Grecian schools. Here were deposited the spoils brought from Jerusalem by Titus, forming a vast public treasury.

Besides the three arches of this majestic ruin, now bare and stripped to the brick walls, all that remains in evidence of its former splendour is one beautiful Corinthian column, cruelly removed from the spot and placed in front of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. It was originally one of the eight exquisite marble pillars which decorated the lofty interior temple. In these latter days the ruin is known as the Basilica, begun by Maxentius, and finished by Constantine, after the battle of Ponte Molle had ended that tyrant's life and reign. According to the present version we must consider this lofty structure only as belonging to "modern Rome," for in that interminable chain of centuries that unlink before one in examining the historic antiquities of Rome, the third or fourth century counts but as yesterday. I for myself prefer the Catholic account, as being the most poetic. According to that, this edifice was built by Augustus in memory of the peace given to the world by the battle of Actium.

Wishing to know how long the solid walls would stand, he consulted the oracle, which replied, "*Quoadusque virgo pariat*" ("Until a virgin bears a son"). The Romans considered this a promise of immortality, and anticipated an eternal existence for the new Temple of Peace; but the same night that saw the Saviour's birth in Bethlehem, the walls of the pagan temple shook and fell; fire suddenly and mysteriously issued from the ground, and the sumptuous pile was consumed.

The modern church of Santa Francesca Romana is built on part of the remains of the temple of Venus and of Rome, designed by the Emperor Adrian, forming one angle of the long-shaped square which marks the valley of the Forum. It is a curious coincidence that on the site of the former temple of "Venus the Happy," Catholic Rome should have dedicated a church to the memory of a Roman matron renowned for her rigid virtue. True, Santa Francesca was married, but her chaste conduct as a wife increased the admiration and respect of her contemporaries. At the death of her husband she became a nun, and commenced a life of severe penance and renunciation, devoting herself to the sick and dying in the hospitals with truly Christian fortitude. "*Elegi abjecta esse in domo Dei.*" A large sisterhood was formed bearing her name, which has religiously preserved some relics of

her sojourn: the room in which she prayed, and the utensils she used while tending the sick and wounded.

Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, furnishes us with a curious fact in connection with this church. He assures us that the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul visited Rome—an historic fact my own rampant Protestantism, on first arriving at Rome, made me culpably overlook in speaking of the former's tomb at St. Peter's. He recounts that the magician, Simon Magus, had preceded them there, and, in order to neutralise their preaching, gave himself out as a god. The Emperor Nero admired him, and statues were already raised to his honour. In order to give a convincing and visible proof of his divinity, the impostor announced that he would publicly raise himself in the air without assistance, and selected the theatre of Nero's golden house as the spot where the proposed prodigy was to take place. All Rome assembled in expectant wonder, and the emperor himself was present in the vestibule of his palace; but St. Peter, who had arrived in Rome unknown to Simon Magus, was also there; and as the magician mounted boldly into mid-air, the Apostle knelt down and prayed earnestly that his blasphemy might be punished. As the arrow flies from the bow, so was the Apostle's prayer heard and answered. Simon suddenly and unaccountably fell to

the earth and was killed, and the stone on which St. Peter knelt retained the impression of his knee, and is visible now in the interior of the church, on the very spot where it is said his prayers were offered—"*Una cosa,*" as the Italians say, "*di gran divozione.*"

Situated on slightly rising ground stands next in order the beautiful Arch of Titus, on a level with the present surface, and therefore seen to much better advantage than its opposite neighbour, the sunken Arch of Septimus Severus. The basso-relievi are remarkably clear and distinct, and the sculptures on the arch indicate a period before the decline of art. On the inner side of the arch, Titus appears in basso-relievo, seated in a triumphal car, conducted by the Genius of Rome, and attended by Victory crowning him with laurels; opposite are the spoils of the Temple—the table of shew-bread, the seven-branched candlestick, the jubilee trumpets, and the incense vessels.

The Jews from the dirty Ghetto never cease to contemplate this monument with profound sorrow and violent indignation. They hate the Romans, past, present, and to come, as the devastators of that shrine, more glorious, in their imagination, than the burnished pillars of the golden sun supporting the opening vaults of morning! A Jew would rather die than pass under that arch, which accounts for the little footpaths

formed on either side. But it is in vain to dispute the Almighty will; the monument of their servitude is not to be ignored, nor the prophecy forgotten which was wrung from our Lord by the hard impiety of the Jewish nation—"Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Continuing my tour round the modern Forum, the steep sides of the Palatine Hill now break the view, rising abruptly aloft, dark, ominous, and gloomy—a hillside on which grow no flowers, where the sun never shines, desolate and uninhabited, broken into deep chasms, and scattered over with huge fragments—broken terraces and shattered arches heaped on each other in indescribable confusion. Grass and reeds, low shrubs and twining vines, overmantle the sombre ruins, and on the summit of the hill rises a sacred wood of evergreen trees, fit diadem for its frowning brow. There is a repulsive grandeur about the stern decay of the Palatine, so impressive and majestic; and, though crumbling into dust, far more exciting to my imagination than the cheerful, sunny, modernly-built, and thickly-populated quarter of the Capitoline Mount, where the past wrestles in vain with the present, and loses all dignity in the encounter.

Under the Palatine a large space of muddy, uneven

ground marks the place where the cattle-market is held; for (O horrid sacrilege!) not only its dignity but its very name has passed away, and the ancient Forum is now only known to the degenerate modern Romans by its designation of "Campo Vaccino!"

At all times are to be seen here herds of slate-coloured oxen—meek, quiet-looking beasts with enormous horns, ruminating beside the frame-carts they draw—and ferocious buffaloes, bending their heads indeed under the yoke, but always rolling round their vicious, untamed eyes. Also Velletri wine-carts, drawn by single horses, with odd one-sided hoods or screens, to shield the driver from the sun and rain, which hood contains often a cross and a small image of the Madonna, to say nothing of a little store of knives, forks, bottles, and pistols. The drivers, with their pointed hats and sunburnt handsome faces, are now resting beside these original conveyances, side by side with the contadini belonging to the oxen—dull, stolid-looking barbarians, that seem to live only to drink and to sleep. There they all rest in picturesque groups (for somehow or other the *pose* of the most common and clownish Italian is always picturesque) under the dark shadow of the Palatine.

Further on, where now stand the churches of Santa Maria Liberatrice and San Teodoro (San Toto), the

Curia Julia, first called Curia Hostilia, was situated, built by Julius Cæsar, and embellished by Augustus, being the place where he convoked the senate. In the centre, on the site of the house built for Valerius Publicola by a grateful people, stood a statue and temple of Victory, while near it was held the slave-market of ancient Rome—that numerous and accursed race, which so often threatened, murdered, and oppressed their haughty masters, intriguing on the very steps of the throne, and sacrificing even the lives of the deified Cæsars to their lust of power, foul passions, and extravagant caprices. The temple of Vesta stood in this part of the Forum, and the Spoliarium of Sylla, a human slaughter-house, daily filled during his dictatorship with the heads of illustrious senators and patricians. Aloft, extending from hill to hill, stretched a bridge constructed by the insane Caligula, in order to enable the deified monster to pass from the imperial palace on the Palatine to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Capitol without crossing the Forum. Of all these structures no vestige remains.

The church of San Toto (behind the Roman Forum, on the way to the Forum Boarium) stands on the supposed site of the *Lupercal*, where, says Shakespeare's Mark Antony, in his famous oration over the body of Cæsar, "I thrice presented him a kingly crown, which

he did thrice refuse." At hand stood, in early times, the temple of Romulus, on the spot where the twin brothers were discovered by the shepherd.

To the formation of the Cloaca Maxima, and other contrivances for draining the marshy ground between the Palatine, Aventine, and Capitoline Hills, must be attributed the altered current of the Tiber, now full a quarter of a mile distant from the traditionary spot where the cradle containing the Alban twins touched the shore. The river being much swollen, the cradle dashed against a stone at a place called Arnanum, and was overturned. The cries of the infants frightened away the shepherds, but attracted the she-wolf by which they were tended until Laurentia, the wife of Faustulus, first saw and bore them to her hut near the Velabrum. The whole story, says Dionysius, was in his day recorded in bronze, in a grotto dedicated to Pan, near a wood also dedicated to the sylvan deities, on the way to the Circus Maximus.

The modern church of San Toto affords little interest. It lies much below the level of the present road leading towards the Aventine, and, darkly overshadowed by the ruins on the summit of the Palatine, wears a sombre aspect. In a *cortile* before the entrance appear some slight remains of an altar; but otherwise the church, which is circular, and about the same size

as the temple of Vesta, has a provokingly modern air; especially the interior, glaringly painted and vulgarly decorated. Miraculous powers are supposed to belong to this church, where the modern Roman *canaglia* to this day constantly bring new-born infants whose lives are in danger. In like manner, ancient Romans are known to have believed that the temple of Romulus possessed miraculous powers of healing infants. Strange contradiction! while close at hand lay the sombre lake of the Velabrum, on whose marshy shores the offspring of illicit love, the children of slaves, and the weak and deformed infants of both patricians and plebeians, were barbarously exposed to perish.

San Teodoro, to whom the church is now dedicated, was a military martyr, soldier of Maximian. He suffered martyrdom for setting fire to a temple where the sight of some obscene pagan rite roused his indignation. When asked by the magistrate why he had so acted, he replied, "I am a Christian, and should do the same again." He was torn with iron pincers until his veins and muscles were laid bare and he expired. His church is opposite that of Santa Martina, on the other side of the Forum. Thus the Christian soldier and the patrician virgin, both martyrs, stand glorious sentinels at the entrance of this classic valley.

The last of the churches surrounding the Forum is the small and quite modern church of Santa Maria Liberatrice, which, gay in whitewash and colours, certainly does not recall by its aspect the temple of Vesta built by Numa, whose site it occupies.

I have now completed the *giro* of the modern Forum, and described it as at present it appears. If the heroic deeds of Roman history rendered this ground and these ruins famous, Christian fortitude and heavenly virtues have also set on them an indelible and immortal imprint. Many of that glorious army of martyrs who stand beside the great white throne, holding their crowns and singing eternal hosannas to the blessed Three, once traversed the Forum, passing along the "Sacred Way" to win their cross within the walls of the Flavian Amphitheatre. They, too, gazed on these stately buildings and lofty palaces as they took their last look on the outward world. Many Roman martyrs were of exalted rank, and claimed friends and relatives among the stern senators sitting on the curule chairs under the long-drawn colonnades. The Christian greatness of Rome yields neither in heroism, devotion, dramatic incident, thrilling interest, nor unflinching stoicism to the much-studied pagan annals. Would that my pen were worthy to celebrate deeds noted by the recording angel on the heavenly tablets!

I do but indicate what each one must follow out alone.

I returned into the Forum. The afternoon was now come, together with a heterogeneous crowd lounging about in all directions. The modern Romans are easily recognisable as they slowly saunter along, wholly regardless of the celebrated scene of their ancestors' greatest triumphs. No wonder: they simply consider it as a dirty space devoted to the sale of cattle. We are not given to studying English history in Smithfield; and to them the Forum presents as few attractions. As decidedly are the English recognised by their trivial and restless curiosity, the questions they ask, and the ignorance they betray. Carriage after carriage may be seen driving up, and party after party of extravagantly-dressed ladies may be seen dismounting in the dirt at various points of peculiar interest, only to peep and peer about as did the famous Davis for pickles in the vases of Pompeii. This vexatious mass of nameless temples particularly engages their attention, and they stand, "Murray" in hand, resolutely decided on understanding what is not understandable. When I see these antiquarian butterflies, attended generally by a servant in livery and a pet spaniel, I confess I am disgusted. Here and there a quiet, unassuming party of plainly-dressed Germans appear, industriously working

their way along, really seeming to approach the place in a right spirit of earnest inquiry; or some solitary traveller, *en grande barbe*, smoking a cigar—sure to be a French *savant*—evidently absorbed and overwhelmed by the rich tide of recollections rising around. A long procession of *frati*, enveloped in black robes and hoods, streams along towards the Coliseum, carrying a large black cross, chanting sad and dismal hymns that echo harmoniously amid the fallen and decaying precincts of the past. Americans abound, active, talkative, and unsympathetic. What sympathy can youth have with decrepitude?—the enterprising young world, springing into life and greatness (rejoicing in liberty and freedom), with the mouldering remains of former tyrants? But whether they come to *say* they have seen, or in reality to worship art at the fallen altars of false gods, they come kindly, Christianly. Neither *morgue*, reserve, nor pride marks their manners; nor do they affect the exclusive indifference of that young English lady who, visiting the Forum for the *first time*, is seated in her carriage deeply engaged in reading the *Times*.

I was invited the other night by Lady Anne St. G—— to go with her to see the Coliseum lit up with coloured lights, in honour of some French notabilities just arrived at Rome. I thought it sounded very bar-

barous; but I went. It was a lovely evening in May, that most charming of all months in an Italian climate. The Coliseum rose before us, serenely, calmly beautiful in the mournful moonlight, breathing a solemn monumental melancholy which was absolutely pathetic. "Those almost articulate walls possess an unspoken eloquence intelligible to the wanderers of all lands. Like the old Memnon statue, they breathe out music; a chord, a note, a thought, a memory, strikes home, and an undying recollection is borne away in every heart. At this season the great ruin is enveloped in delicious groves; beautiful walks are formed around it, planted with graceful acacia-trees, the branches, now weighed down by snowy blossoms, perfuming the night air almost oppressively. As we strolled about the gigantic ruins and up and down the moonlit arcades, unspeakable hope and peace came into my soul. Angels seemed to look down from the star-sown heavens, and the spirits of slaughtered saints to sanctify the scene of their martyrdom. Looking at the moon, clear and argentine as a silver mirror, the ills and troubles of this life faded away like a vain and troubled dream. I rejoiced that God had made the world so fair, and had permitted me thus to enjoy it. Oh! it was well with me on that peaceful night, and with so congenial a companion as walked beside

me! She, being a devout Catholic, contemplated the scene with a religious enthusiasm I could scarcely join in. She recalled to me that curious prophecy recorded by the Venerable Bede, as repeated by the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims of his day:—

> "While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
> When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
> And when Rome falls—the world!"

Standing under the black shadows, cutting the ground with almost palpable lines, how clear and bright shone out the snowy walls—beautiful as some fairy palace built for a magician's bride, and soft and mellow as the heavens above! This partial light, half concealing, half displaying interminable successions of arches, led the eye through mysterious vistas marked here and there by an oblique ray of moonlight, on to the central space, where altars, and mouldering galleries, and terraced colonnades swam in a sea of subdued splendour. Towards the Baths of Titus, on a rising ground near by, a wood of pomegranates descended towards the Coliseum, and we could just discern the thousand crimson flowers among the rich dark leaves. To the right, buried in deep shadow, rose the Arch of Constantine. Through the three arches that pierce its massive façade the moon cast long lines of brightness on the ruined mass of the once brilliant fountain of the Meta Sudans, where,

through a perforated column surmounted by a colossal statue of Jupiter, an abundant stream descended into a vast marble basin for the use of the athletes and gladiators of the amphitheatre. Close by, a few rough stones indicate the pedestal where stood this colossal statue that gave its name to the beauteous structure. After decorating the golden house of Nero, it was removed by Vespasian to this amphitheatre, which he was then erecting at the extremity of the Via Sacra, and transformed into the image of Apollo. Stupendous rays of glory surrounded the head. Adrian removed it a second time, and Commodus changed it into a likeness of himself. The golden house of Nero and the Coliseum! What a whole history lies in those names;—what deeds—what emperors—what saints—what crimes uprose! Where we now stood in the peaceful moonlight a lake once existed; and, surrounding its shores, that golden palace of Nero, which was a city in itself. Not satisfied with the already overgrown palace on the Palatine, which had contented other Cæsars, and also finding his abode at the Vatican too small, he extended his new palace over the entire area of the Esquiline (Santa Maria Maggiore), the Cœlian (San Giovanni Laterano), and the Palatine, with which it was connected by a bridge. Within its walls were "expansive lakes and fields of vast extent, intermixed with

pleasing variety; woods and forests stretched to an interminable length, presenting gloom and solitude amidst scenes of open space, where the eye wandered with surprise over an unbounded prospect."* The palace itself stood in the centre of this elysium, colossal in proportion and fabulous in splendour. The Temple of Peace, of prodigious height, formed the vestibule, surrounded by a triple range of columns of the most exquisite marble. From the vestibule opened the *atrium*, a hall of extraordinary magnificence, gorgeous with statues, paintings, ivory, mosaics, marbles, and gold, large enough to serve for the assembly of the senate, when it suited the caprice of the tyrant to gather them there. A splendid portal opened on the lake; Suetonius says "it was like a sea surrounded with palaces," which its waters doubled in reflecting. Opposite the portal was placed the colossal statue of Nero, one hundred and twenty feet high, a statue whose subsequent vicissitudes I have mentioned. Deified during his life, his image was surrounded by a golden nimbus, and, like Nebuchadnezzar, Nero exacted divine honours in his own palace. The ceilings of the different halls were covered with plates of gold, set off by diamonds and precious stones; the walls were decorated with gilding and the most exquisite paintings and statues; the floors

* Tacitus.

inlaid, as with costly embroidery, with those unrivalled mosaics of which many specimens taken from contemporary ruins still remain. The *triclinia*, or eating-rooms, were surrounded by turning panels of ebony incrusted with ivory, from whence flowers and perfumes descended on the guests, who lay extended on couches spread with roses and myrtles, wearing garlands of odoriferous flowers. All that earth, sea, or air furnished most rare and delicate, was served up in vases of gold and silver, sometimes to the number of twenty-two different courses. Several slaves were placed near each guest, some to fan him, and some to chase away the flies with branches of myrtle. Musicians filled the air with delicious symphonies, and troops of young children executed voluptuous dances, accompanied by the merry clatter of the castanets. Anon the walls folded away like a screen, and displayed a theatre, where the sight of the gladiators' bloody combats gave the last *gusto* to the banquet; they were even introduced into the very room, and slew each other in the imperial presence. Sometimes the entertainment was varied by combats of men and animals. Artificial groves surrounded the lake, where, among the branches, silver birds of the finest workmanship represented peacocks, swans, and doves. The baths presented every refinement of luxury. They glittered with gold, silver, marble,

and mosaic, and were often used three times in one day.

Within these halls of fabulous luxury did the voluptuous Nero—the tyrant, comedian, and poet—abandon himself to every vice; he sang, he wrestled, he drove chariots, he shed torrents of innocent blood. Here his passion kindled for Poppæa, during the lifetime of the innocent Octavia, who expiated the crime of having thwarted the monster's caprice by her speedy banishment and murder in the island of Pandataria. Poppæa's voice, which had often waked the echoes of these golden halls by her violent reproaches, was heard no more upbraiding; in becoming empress, she was satisfied. *Cui bono?* She in her turn soon fell a victim to Nero's cruelty.

Here died Britannicus, poisoned, while his brother's guest at one of these epicurean banquets; and here did Nero meditate the murder of his mother Agrippina—a crime so unnatural that it even startled the depraved and brutalised Romans! And what remains of this imperial pomp? A few stones and rubbish, the ruined pedestal where once stood the colossal image, and some deep-buried subterraneous chambers filled with bricks and lime. The neighbouring Baths of Titus were built over part of the golden house—and why? Because the memory of Nero was so execrated that Rome

considered it a scandal and a disgrace to allow one stone to rest upon another of the palace which had sheltered him.

Then there came a great change over that world-stage. A notable act was finished in the universal drama, and the curtain of oblivion fell on many actors. When it again rose a new dynasty sat on the throne of the Cæsars, and victories and triumphs, the glory of the Roman eagles and the iron bravery of the legions, filled the heart of the great city with joy.

Where had stood the golden house appeared now two remarkable objects—the Arch of Titus and the Flavian Amphitheatre. Later came the Arch of Constantine, forming a mystic triangle, standing as it were on the confines of ancient and modern Rome, symbolising Judaism and its conquest, paganism and its crimes, and Christianity bringing down heaven to earth in its angelic creed.

The mighty Coliseum standing before me was raised on a theatre of blood, and faithful to the traditions of the former palace, amid blood and tears, sorrow and despair, did those gigantic walls arise under the hands of the Jews brought captive by Titus from Jerusalem. Thousands and thousands lay them down to die, wearied out and faint, beside their labour; for, incredible though it seems, the vast pile was certainly completed

in *ten*, if not, according to some authorities, in *four* years.

Never were the four orders of architecture so harmoniously combined as in these arched walls, on which the shadows now fall so heavily in the moonlight. Successive masses of gloom indicate some of the many entrances, of which there are eighty, all numbered except one—the imperial ingress opposite the Palatine Hill, where was a subterranean passage constructed by Commodus, in which he was very nearly assassinated.

Among these openings one was named *Sandapilaria*, or *Libitinalis;* the other, *Sanavivaria*. Near the former was the *Spoliarium*, where the bodies of men and beasts killed on the arena were thrown pell-mell; an awful charnel-house, which must have overflowed when imperial Titus inaugurated his amphitheatre by games which lasted one hundred days, and five thousand wild beasts and many thousand gladiators were killed.

Waiting for the arrival of the company, we had quietly paced round and round the Coliseum. I devoutly hoped they would not come, but at last, after a long space, Count Z—— and a whole tribe of French ladies made their appearance. The French Zouave at first positively refused to let us enter.

"*On ne passe pas par ici*," echoed through the colonnade.

"*Comment!*" cried one of his countrywomen; "*vous êtes Français et si peu galant? Mon Dieu!*" added she, turning to Count Z——; "*c'est qu'il faut qu'il y ait bien longtemps qu'il a quitté la France!*"

Count Z—— expostulated in Italian, talking as rapidly as Figaro, declared he had a *permesso*, got furious and excited, and swore classical oaths; but it was all of no use. The musket still barred the entrance, and the man was immovable. To be sure, it was enough to anger any one less excitable than an Italian, to have invited a large party there and not to be able to get in. Count Z—— rushed frantically about, clutching his hair, and looking quite melodramatic, with his full Spanish cloak draped around him. At last the *scena* ended in our favour by the appearance of the custode from within, who at once cleared the way.

"*Mon ami,*" said the French lady to the Zouave as she passed him, "*souvenez-vous toujours qu'un Français doit faire partout place aux dames.*"

The Coliseum by moonlight is very beautiful; a dim mysterious look hangs about the walls half sunk in deepest gloom, half revealed in the clear moonlight; yet I cannot say that to me it appeared more impressive than by day, though certainly more poetical. I had gone with a vague, undefined idea of something wonderful, and I was disappointed. The coloured lights

were barbarous, and made the venerable ruin look like a scene in an extravaganza. One fine effect was produced by placing large torches of pitch under a series of arches in the upper stories, bringing out grandly every overarching line and pillar, even the long grass trailing in the breeze, while all the foreground was buried in gloom. For my own part, I prefer the Coliseum as I have described it on a Friday afternoon, when the black penitents are grouped around the altars and about the central cross, mingled with groups of Roman women in their rich picturesque dresses, all kneeling in various attitudes of deep devotion, a mellow wintry sun lighting up the whole.

While the French ladies, attended by the now radiant count, raced about the galleries, appearing and disappearing among the arches in the red and blue lights, looking like a *sabbat* of witches, I sat down on the steps of the black cross planted in the centre of the arena, and fell to rebuilding and repeopling those mighty galleries.

The space around is deep in sand, and lions, panthers, and bears roar in their barred cages on a level with the arena. The imperial door (which bears no name engraven on it) opens, and the emperor enters, gorgeously apparelled in the imperial purple, wearing on his head a crown of gold. He is followed

by the court, also in magnificent apparel, brilliant as stars, but of inferior magnitude. Next following are the vestal virgins, robed in white draperies and purple mantles, and the senate arrayed in white togas with embroidered borders of gold. These all take their places on the lowest gallery, the *podium*, protected by a golden network. Eighty-seven thousand spectators pour in, and fill those upper ranges of seats in an instant, as if by magic; the matrons and virgins, resplendent in scarlet, purple, gold, and diamonds, forming a brilliant circle apart from the darker-robed men.

After the sacrifices, which always preceded the games, martial music thunders forth, and the gladiators appear, ranging themselves in two parallel lines, bearing whips with which they scourge the wretched *bestiarii*, who in a long line pass between them—slaves, prisoners, Christians, children, women, and old men—all devoted to die in the coming games. Preceded by a herald, the gladiators now pass in procession round the amphitheatre, bowing to the emperor, and exclaiming, "*Cæsar, morituri te salutant*" ("Cæsar, those about to die salute thee"). But the opening ceremonies are tedious to the impatient plebs, who roar and cry in the upper galleries, and will wait no longer, so *the vestals* give the signal to begin. The grated doors are raised, and the wild

beasts rush like a hurricane over the arena—a hurricane that rains blood; for see in a moment the arms, legs, heads, and entrails that cover the sand! Troop after troop of *bestiarii* appear—the excitement is inflamed to madness—emperor, people, women, vestals, gloat upon the sight of blood, and applaud and incite the hideous carnage. The *bestiarii* being all despatched, the attendants drag off the bodies into the Spoliarium: one of them is called Mercury, the other Pluto, and they bear the attributes of these divinities. Mercury touches the dying with a red-hot iron, and Pluto gives the *coup de grâce.* Handsome slaves, elegantly dressed, appear and rake over the sand to obliterate the traces of blood, while ingeniously-contrived gratings exude showers of perfumes over the amphitheatre. The *velarium* at the top, arranged so as to exclude the sun, undulates with an artificial movement, serving as a great fan or gigantic ventilator, while songs and symphonies are accompanied by an harmonious orchestra, and buffoons and tumblers amuse the audience.

But see! the gladiators mounted on splendid cars appear, and driving round, again salute the emperor. "*Cæsar, morituri te salutant*" resounds in chorus. They are dressed in short red or white tunics, with cinctures of worked leather; and each man bears a small shield, a trident, and a net. Some, however, have

only a larger shield, and others carry a noose, or are armed with swords. They are mostly Gauls by birth, and are to fight both on horseback and on foot successively, one troop after another, to vary the games by their particular modes of combat. Some there are, *sine missione*, self-doomed to death, and this fact has been duly noticed on the *manifesti* in order to draw more company. The trumpets sound—the fight has begun! The swords cross—lances meet—and blood again flows in copious streams. Yet the people grumble and hiss—death is too sudden; the combatants are to eke out life by wounds to the utmost moment—not to strike and kill. "There is no amusement in seeing a man die," shouts one. "They are cowards, these gladiators," cries another. "They want to live," roars a third; but "They shall die," sounds all around. And die they shall, for their life rests on the *vox populi*, and that is now raised in horrid yells and shouts, hoarse as with blood. The spectators rise *en masse*—the vestals, too, stretch forth their arms, and threaten with gestures worthy of the Furies, terrible, convulsive — the wretched gladiators are doomed, and fall to a man. Fresh gladiators appear, and are more prodigal of their blood; and as hideous wounds are inflicted, the cry, "*Hoc habet! Hoc habet!*" flies round. Perhaps when one, who has fought nobly and

interested the audience, is about to receive a death-blow, the thumb is *raised*, as the almost dying gladiator appeals to the people, and he is spared. If the thumb be *lowered*, it is the sign of instant death, and the gladiator, holding in his hand the sword of his adversary, must direct the point against his own throat.

This is a glorious exhibition, and each time it occurs maddens the whole audience with delight. The vestals, more furious than the one-breasted Amazons of yore, clap their hands in loud applause, and the whole amphitheatre thrills with transports of savage excitement. Three times have the handsome slaves cleared the arena; three times the odoriferous perfumes have descended. The combats of man to man are over for this day, but yet the audience is not contented—more blood must flow; blood always, but with a variety. Some richly-dressed slaves appear with a brazier of burning coals. What can this signify? The people have heard of the heroic fortitude of Mutius Scævola, but have not seen it; the degenerate descendants of the ancient Romans desire to behold represented the very act of their republican ancestor. A man advances into the midst of the arena, dressed in a *tunica incendialis* of sulphur; a lighted torch is held on each side; if he moves, he burns; and in this position he parodies Mutius, and his right hand is burnt off! *Bestiarii* are

again dragged forth, while, moving from the principal entrance, appear artificial mounds covered with trees, shrubs, and herbage; suddenly their sides collapse, and lions, bears, panthers, and bisons rush into the arena. The carnage recommences—blood again scents the air, and men and animals sink down on the sand in hideous death embraces. At last no more victims are left. A few savage animals remain masters of the field, and quietly sit down to crack the human bones around them.

Thus perished St. Ignatius, the Christian bishop, sent from the far East expressly to die in the Roman amphitheatre. He kneels in the midst of the arena, and the eyes of a hundred thousand spectators are bent upon him. "I am the Lord's wheat," exclaimed he, "and I must be broken by the teeth of the beasts before I can become the bread of Jesus Christ." While he yet speaks, two lions fling themselves upon him, and in a moment nothing is left but a few large bones. Armies of martyrs perished within these walls —perished by a like death, and died rejoicing—Eustace, and the virgins Martina, Tatiana, and Prisca; Julius and Marius and the rest—whose spirits now rejoice in glory. Oh, sublime and immortal idea of the Catholic Church to consecrate this detested spot, and plant a cross in the centre! "*In hoc signo vici.*" Here indeed is the Cross triumphant!

II.

The Forum and the Capitol by Night—"In Memoriam"—Legends of the Church of the Ara Cœli—A Scrap of Contemporary History.

I LEFT the party with whom I had visited the Coliseum deep in discussion touching a certain emperor's supposed admiration for an English lady, who, if report speaks true, would have had no objection to re-enact the *rôle* of the Montespan or the Pompadour. The French ladies had been charmed with the coloured lights and a game of hide-and-seek with the count in the lower gallery. Every one was talking. I pined for solitude, and wandered off along the Sacred Way towards the Forum. Once out of reach of the ladies' shrill voices, not a sound broke the solemn stillness of the night. The moon, yet high in the heavens, cast down her "dim religious light;" the stars shone out, leading the mind to other worlds, more glorious perchance than our own; the night breezes blew softly by, heavy with perfume. How was it? Suddenly a cloud came before my eyes, the present vanished, and I was again at the old home, the sunny home where I was born. How my heart

swelled as I gazed at the bright English woods of living oak, and the terraced garden sloping to the sun, where I played as a child! And there were the verandah and the dear round room, and the books, and the arm-chair, and one that was wont to sit in it, so fondly loved, so hardly parted from—one whom I never shall see again! Her eyes were turned upon me with an earnest mother's glance, and I felt her soft hand. But hold, my tears!—the vision had fled, and my soul sickened to think it was a dream! But oh! the depths of household memories, the deep, thrilling chords of unutterable love that were struck in that brief instant of my spirit's wandering!

Opposite the Coliseum, on a low hill, stands a lonely portico, its altar broken and its statue gone, once forming part of the magnificent temple designed and built by Adrian, and dedicated to Venus and to Rome. A forest of stately arcades on either side united the double portico elevated on marble steps, conceived by the imperial architect as an improvement on the design of the famous Apollodorus, whose skill had roused his envy, and whose life was afterwards sacrificed by a too honest criticism of the emperor's design. Still, notwithstanding the disapprobation of Apollodorus, no temple in ancient Rome excelled it in grandeur. The remains of the pillared colonnade border the

Sacred Way—that way still paved with the identical great blocks of stone worn by the chariot-wheels of old Rome! What a world of recollections does it not evoke! What tears have fallen here — what glory passed by! How many joyful feet have rushed along it—what noble blood has soiled it! Here passed the Emperors Augustus, Nero, Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian, gods and priests, to offer sacrifices in the great temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, "supremely great and good," followed by the most gorgeous trains the sun ever shone upon. Here passed the triumphant generals and commanders seated in burnished chariots of gold—Trajan and Titus and Julius Cæsar, Pompey and Sylla, and so many others, crowned with martial laurels won from barbarian nations whose names the world scarce knew—bearing the front of celestial Jove himself in their high pride, as the voices of assembled thousands proclaimed them "saviours of their country," and saluted the victorious legions in their train. Slowly and wearily over those great stones long lines of captives dragged their clanking chains. Here passed the sainted Apostles Peter and Paul to the damp vaults of the Mamertine prison; and here the captive Jews, chained to the car of victorious Titus, licked the dust before the Roman plebeians. And if tears have fallen, blood has also been spilt. The

aged Galba tottered along it towards the Milliarum Aureum, when, regardless of his grey hairs, the savage soldiers mercilessly massacred him, opposite the Forum, in face of the Roman people, who dared not raise a voice to stay the cruel deed. Vitellius, too, was dragged half clothed along the Sacred Way, like a beast to be slaughtered in the shambles. Here in early times the wicked Tullia drove in her chariot to the Forum, where sat her husband Lucius, the murderer of her father, whom she saluted king. Here Messalina, proud as Juno, flaunted her voluptuous charms and perfumed vestments. Lucretia's footsteps often pressed these stones when, still a proud and happy wife, she passed to sacrifice in the temple of Juno, where none but the chastest matrons dared to enter. Out by hence Volumnia and Virgilia sped, fired with the high resolve of saving prostrate Rome; and here, too, on her way to school, went young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome,

> "With her small tablets in her hand,
> And her satchel on her arm."

The elegant Horace himself tells us he loved to saunter here and criticise the passing scene; and Cicero, with his imperious wife, Terentia—and Catullus and Tacitus—and Livy, all in their day traversed this great world-thoroughfare, ever ebbing and flowing

with multitudes from the basilicas, the temples, the forums, and the circus that bordered its sides; those sides where stood strange uncouth elephants of bronze side by side with the statue of Horatius, who nobly held the bridge against the Etruscan army—one man's arm against a host—and of the brave maiden Clœlia, who, rather than dwell longer in the camp of her country's enemies, trusted herself and her companions to the waters of Father Tiber, "to whom the Romans pray."

And now I have reached the Forum. How lovely it is here under this mild and tempered light! No harsh lines—no rude contrasts—no incongruous colours now break the spell that haunts the scene of the mighty past. The lonely marble pillars stand out clear and bright, linking together historic memories of the palladian splendour with which it was once adorned. Lofty arches appear, bearing no marks of decay, but fresh and snowy as when first dug from the marble quarries; and deep porticoes cast long shadows over the modern buildings, which now shrink back, ashamed to obtrude on this honoured ground haunted by the memories of grand and heroic deeds, and consecrated in the world's historic page above any other spot on God's wide earth. It is an awful and a solemn thing to visit the valley of the Forum by night; the darkness of ages and the dim-

ness of decay are imaged by the heavy gloom that then hangs around these mysterious precincts—precincts haunted by the mighty dead, whose shadows seem yet to linger about the habitations they loved so well when living. Yonder stood that venerable Forum, the hearth and home of early as of imperial Rome; the market, the exchange, the judgment-seat, the promenade, the parliament, where lived, and moved, and loved, and fought that iron nation predestined to possess the earth, founded (in the fabulous days when the world was young, and the gods loved "the daughters of men") by Romulus on the field where he waged battle with the Sabine forces. Finding that his troops were flying before the enemy, and that no one would face about to fight, Romulus knelt down in the midst of the terrified soldiers, and lifting up his hands to heaven, prayed "Father Jupiter" to defend and rally his people, now in extreme peril. Jupiter, it was believed, heard and granted his prayer; for the fugitives, struck with sudden reverence for their king, turned, re-formed their broken lines, and repulsed the advancing Sabines. But the daughters of the Sabines, who had previously been forcibly carried off from the Great Circus, rushed down from the Aventine between the opposing armies, with their infants in their arms, calling now on a Roman husband, now on a Sabine father or

brother to desist, and so stayed the fight by their cries, lamentations, and entreaties. Peace was then concluded between the two nations, and Tatius, the Sabine king, offered sacrifices and joined in eternal friendship with Romulus—burying the wrongs done to the Sabine women in the foundations of the common Forum. Tarquinius Priscus erected spacious porticoes around it to screen and temper the halls from the sun and wind, and built shops for the foreign wares that came from Ostia, Antium, and Etruria; those shops for ever famous as the spot where perished Virginia by her father's hand.

I endeavoured to rebuild the fallen walls of the Forum such as they afterwards appeared—a vast and noble enclosure—surrounded by many rows of marble columns, open arcades, and majestic porticoes, stretching away in long lines towards the Capitoline Mount. Between these pillared colonnades rose a wall of division, hung, in the time of Cæsar, with splendid drapery, to shelter the togaed senators, tribunes, and patricians, who paced up and down on brilliant mosaic floors, or sat in judgment in the senate-house, or gave laws to the universe. Innumerable statues, modelled by the best sculptors of Greece and Rome, broke the lines of the pillars, while brilliant paintings decorated the internal walls, within

whose ample enclosure rose three great basilicas—the Optima, the Æmilian, and the Julian, besides the Comitium, where the Curiæ met. The rostra also stood within the Forum, containing the orator's pulpit, where Rome so often hung enchanted over the eloquence of Cicero; where Mark Antony fired the populace to revenge "great Cæsar's fall," the mutilated body lying on a bier exposed before him; where Caius Gracchus melted the hearts of his audience; and where Manlius sought to suspend the fatal sentence hanging over him, as he pointed to the Capitol and bade his countrymen remember how his arm alone had sustained it. Close at hand was the tribunal where the magistrates sat on ivory chairs, whence came the decree of Brutus condemning his own sons to die, and that other of Titus Manlius, who preferred his son's death at his tribunal rather than, living, know him disobedient to the consular power, then vested in himself—barbarous rigour, that afterwards wrought such grief and woe, when power and injustice went hand in hand in Rome! Near here grew the Ruminalis—that mysterious fig-tree whose shade sheltered Romulus and Remus while the wolf suckled them. In the time of Augustus it was enclosed in a temple. The sanctuary of Vesta, with its roof of bronze, stood near the Comitium, circular in shape, chaste, and pure in design, where the sacred virgins, clad in long

white vestments bordered with imperial purple, tended the sacred fire that burned under the image of the goddess, and guarded the Palladium—a golden shield, on whose preservation it was said Rome's existence depended. Behind the temple, at the foot of the Palatine, stretches a wood of evergreen oaks devoted to silence and repose, where the dark branches waved over the tombs of departed vestals, whose spirits it was believed passed at once to the delights of the Elysian Fields. Under the Palatine Hill, and near the shrine of Vesta, a pure fountain of freshest water broke into a magnificent marble basin close to the portico of a temple dedicated to Castor and Pollux. It was said, and believed, that after the battle of Lake Regillus, the great twin brethren, mounted on snow-white horses and radiant in celestial beauty, suddenly appeared in the Forum, and announced to the anxious and expectant multitude the victory gained by their fellow-citizens over the Etruscans. At this fountain they stopped and refreshed their horses, and when asked whence they came and by what name men called them, they suddenly disappeared. So the Romans raised a temple to their honour by the spring where they had rested on mortal earth.

Where now the moon lights up a barren space, the Gulf of Curtius once yawned in the very midst of the Forum, to the horror and astonishment of the super-

stitious senators, who judged the omen so awful, that the anger of the gods could only be allayed by the sacrifice of what Rome deemed most precious — a bold and noble warrior, armed *cap-à-pie*, who flung himself headlong into the abyss.

Afterwards Domitian raised, as it were in derision, a colossal statue of himself over this spot hallowed by patriotic recollections. Beside it stands the single column of Phocas, once crowned by his gilded statue; while, to the right, the massive pile of the triumphal Arch of Severus flings down black shadows on the marble stairs descending from the Capitol.

The Capitol, the heart of Rome, the sanctuary of the pagan world, stood forth in my fancy radiant and glorious, piled with glittering temples, superb porticoes, and lofty arches, the abodes of the gods on earth. Here, amidst statues, monuments, and columns, rise sumptuous fanes consecrated to Peace, to Vespasian, Jupiter-Feretrius, and Saturn; while, crowning the hill and overlooking the Forum, is the Tabularium, surrounded by long ranges of open porticoes, within whose walls hang recorded, on tables of brass, the treaties Rome concluded with friends or enemies.

Around is an open space called the Intermontium, between the rising peaks of the hill, where grew a few shattered time-worn oaks, endeared to the plebs by the

recollection that Romulus made this spot at all times the most sacred and inviolable asylum to those who sought the hospitality of his new city. All crimes, all treasons safely harboured here! To the right, high above the rest, uprose the awful temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, at once a fortress and a sanctuary—the most venerable and the most gorgeous pile that the imagination of man can conceive, adorned with all that art could invent, and blazing with the plunder of the world. Here came the consuls to assume the military dress, and to offer sacrifices before proceeding to battle. Here, in special seasons of danger, the senate assembled before the statue of the god who presided, as it were, over the destinies of the people; here the tables of the law were displayed to the citizens, and the most splendid religious rites performed. The façade, turned towards the south and east, consisted of a gigantic portico supported by six ranges of columns; statues of gilt bronze alternated with the pillars, on which were suspended countless trophies of victory, magnificent shields and plates of gold, glittering arms won from barbarian enemies of the gods, together with swords, axes, and shields worn by generals who had returned victorious to Rome, and who had enjoyed the honours of a military triumph. Statues of gilt bronze were ranged along the roof, covered in with

tiles of gilt brass, all save the cupola, which was open, disdaining any other roofing than that of the eternal heavens. Superb basso-relievi decorated the entablature and frieze, and vast colonnades of the most precious coloured marbles extended on either side of the central temple, linking together two side porticoes of almost equal splendour. That to the right was dedicated to Juno; that to the left to Minerva, the wife and daughter of the terrible god who sat enthroned within the gilded walls of the central sanctuary, crowned with a golden diadem, wearing a toga of purple, and holding in his hand the awful thunder destined to destroy the enemies of imperial Rome. Jupiter, "supremely great and good," had never, according to the Romans, condescended to inhabit any other earthly abode, and was particularly propitious when approached in his great temple on the Capitol, where his altars burned with perpetual incense spread by imperial hands, and generals, Cæsars, kings, and potentates came from the far ends of the earth to offer costly sacrifices and worship.

Beyond the Tabularium, on the opposite side of the hill, where the moon now lights up a mass of dingy walls, stood the citadel built on the Tarpeian Rock, its base once bathed by the waters of the Tiber. This fortress, conquered by the indignant Sabines and heroically defended by Manlius against the Gauls, is now no

more. Not a vestige remains of it save only, in the museum of the Campidoglio, the "brazen images" of those patriotic geese that woke the echoes on that dark night so nearly fatal to the existence of Rome. A temple dedicated to Juno Moneta was afterwards built on the foundations of the house of Manlius, where the archives of the city and the public treasury were preserved.

And what was this mighty city that I sought to disinter from the darkness of the past, and to rebuild, standing alone in the Forum under the moon's pale light? Within its precincts the dark ilex and cypress branches waved over altars, grottoes, and tombs, in thirty-two sacred groves. Fourteen aqueducts once linked Rome with the Alban and Sabine Hills, drawing large rivers and softly-gushing mountain-springs to feed its fountains, palaces, and circuses. From the golden milestone in the Forum distances were measured, and roads extended over the whole of the then known world — the Appian, the *regina viarum*, passing through Naples to Brindisi, the Flaminian, the Aurelian, the Latin, Æmilian, and Salarian Ways. Along those endless high roads, in sumptuous palaces, under countless porticoes, in temples and forums (of which Rome reckoned fourteen, each of surpassing magnificence), circuses, and baths, all monuments of the

luxury, the power, and the civilisation of the mistress of the world, five millions of inhabitants circulated. Fifty-six public baths of unrivalled size and splendour served as a promenade and recreation to this luxurious people. Two immense amphitheatres and two circuses, each accommodating nearly one hundred thousand spectators, amused their idle hours. Five vast lakes for naval combats, thirty-six marble arches of triumph, nineteen public libraries, forty-eight obelisks, and a universe of marble, bronze, and stone statues, peopled the city with an elegant and refined splendour.

Where now the desolate Campagna clasps the fallen city with a zone of sylvan beauty, buildings, streets, markets, temples, gardens, the environments of an immense city, once appeared. The fatal beauty of this district tells a tale of former splendour, even after centuries of ruin. Rome once extended to Otricoli (a day's journey distant), to Ostia (where the sea bore merchandise and riches to its shores), to Tivoli, and to Albano. Then came a cincture of enchanting villas, wealthy farms, and rich vineyards belonging to emperors and nobles, nestling in soft valleys, clothing the distant mountains with incredible fertility, and enriching even the remotest rural districts with monuments of rich and varied architecture.

It is said that when Hormisdas, the Persian architect, accompanied the Emperor Constantine into Rome, he was so astonished at the grandeur of the buildings, that he supposed he had passed through the finest portion of the city while still upwards of twenty miles distant from the Forum!

But Rome—though still bearing even in her decline the heavenly keys conferring the sacred power to bind and to loose the Catholic world, and the golden crown for the head of imperial Cæsar—no longer wears the glittering robes of purple and gold as of yore. The universe no longer quails under her iron sceptre. Sorrow and suffering, age and ruin, have wrinkled her imperial brow; her lofty spirit has fled, her head is bowed in the dust, and she weeps, for the days of her mourning are come!

In the midst of my joy and happiness at being in Rome, Death came like a dark shadow between myself and the living, obscuring the bright world, and spreading his gloomy wings over one I loved. Death came with his icy breath, to tell me that this world is but a passing, many-hued vision, and that art, intellect, earthly grandeur, the intoxication of wealth, the delights of learning, and the pride of science must fall before the mysterious summons to that unseen world towards which each moment we are hastening!

It came like a sad but wholesome lesson, for I had been too happy. A lovely girl, not yet twenty, had come from the distant shores of the New World to seek health under these warm Italian skies. She was beautiful, this young American—beautiful with the type of her Indian blood; but there was death in the fragile form and in the dark, restless eyes. Yet she was young and full of hope—life lay so fresh and fair before her! Her gaiety, her grace, her goodness, seemed to defy the dark fate looming in the distance. We forgot she was ill, for she was the gayest of us all, and her joyfulness infected us. But the dreary day came in the early spring, when even Italian winds are chill and wintry. She sank and sank. Still ever and anon abundant youth prevailed, and she fought sorely with the foe. But her hours were numbered, and the angel of death descended upon that once cheerful house, and bore our pretty flower to bloom in the heavenly gardens. In pity to her innocence and youth, the dread visitant came softly and gently. She died sitting in her chair, and none knew until she was cold but that she peacefully slumbered. Sleep it was —but a sleep from which there is no awaking to the soft voice of beloved friends. Oh! there were grief, horror, misery, and despair when we knew that she was called away. It was a scene too harrowing to

describe. Then there came friends from her own land —holy, pious women like the blessed saints of old. They laid her on the bier in the same room where her merry laugh had so lately echoed, and where we had gazed with delight upon her beauty. A plain deal shell, the boards uncovered according to Italian custom, enclosed her virgin form. Did I speak of beauty? Never did she look half so fair. Death had spared her even a sigh, and she lay calm and composed as a sleeping infant—alabaster was not more white. The long lashes fringed her pale cheeks—a wreath of white roses bound her rich auburn hair—a crucifix lay on her breast; and white flowers, fit emblems of her maiden innocence, strewed the coffin. Never before had I looked on the face of the dead; but here was no horror; death was disarmed of all his terrors, and seemed but the gentle messenger to eternal peace in the far-off fatherland above. There was no reserve or refusal in the survivors to receive the sympathy of friends. We sat round the darkened room in solemn contemplation, and prayed before the bier. Eternity seemed there, and the sweet dead linked us to the world of spirits whither we must all go. The crowd and the garish world buzzed and jarred around, heedless of our great grief. Day and night we sat beside the corpse and watched; no one

would leave her. But on the evening of the second day there came footsteps, and whisperings of strange voices, and strange forms like spirits of evil, fearful to behold, all clothed in black from head to foot. Only their eyes were visible through their serge hoods. They bore torches in their hands, and pressed round our beloved. We took one last look—impressed one last kiss on the pale, icy lips—scattered fresh flowers over the bier. Then she was borne out by the black gliding ghosts. A long procession formed in the street—priests, and monks, and choristers; I saw her overshrouded by the pall—the white crown of roses at her head, and a cross of flowers at her feet; the low chant burst forth, the tapers glimmered in the dark streets, and she was gone from us *for ever!*

* * * * *

I have already mentioned the church of the Ara Cœli, and its miraculous and very ugly Santo Bambino, which, at the time of the revolution, drove about, they say, in the Pope's state carriage, by order of the Government, to visit the sick who invoked it. Beside the splendid memories that cling to these mouldering walls, now falling into a second decay, there is much that is venerable and interesting in its architecture and traditions. It stands on the highest point of the Capitoline Hill, high above the modern structure of the

Campidoglio, designed by Michel Angelo—to my mind one of the many *fiascos* committed by that extraordinary man. The principal entrance is reached by a broad and lofty flight of one hundred and twenty-four marble steps. At Christmas-time it is the custom to form a solemn procession inside the church, when the Bambino is carried in triumph, followed by priests in rich vestments carrying lights and incense, and by a long line of the dark-robed, barefooted Franciscan monks. The Bambino is declared to have been carved by a Franciscan pilgrim out of a tree which grew on the Mount of Olives, and to have been painted by St. Luke while the monk slept over his work. As the procession passes the entrance it is held up for veneration to the sound of solemn music and chanting, when hundreds of the lower classes prostrate themselves on the long flights of steps, grouped in various attitudes of delight, admiration, and awe. Some are so devout as actually to ascend the steps on their knees, in the same manner as at the *Scala Santa*, in honour of the Santo Bambino. The crowd within the church was so dense and exceedingly ill-savoured that I could scarcely remain to see the conclusion of the ceremony.

At this festive season the Presepio is also exhibited in one of the side chapels, and is much visited, as being the best in Rome. A species of theatre is formed,

raised to the level of the altar, on which appear full-sized figures of Joseph and Mary; the latter holding in her arms the Bambino, wearing its diamond crown, and glittering with gold offerings and jewels. Before them are prostrated the shepherds, their sheep reposing near; in the recesses of the grotto-stable appear the oxen feeding in their stalls; while above, in a glory, heaven opens, and the Almighty, surrounded by the celestial host, gazes down upon the touching scene. As the representation is extremely graceful, and the figures are artistically correct in drapery and expression, I must confess that I viewed with pleasure a sacred picture recalling the humiliation and love of our divine Saviour, thus visibly brought home to the senses. By Catholics it is contemplated with unquestioning and unaffected reverence and gratitude. They adore the Saviour in the symbolic image, and earnest prayers, long looks of love, heaving sighs, and tearful eyes, evidence the intensity of their feelings. The Presepio is not shown until the falling day permits of an artificial light. When the body of the church is in deep gloom this one bright, happy, genial spot shines out, shedding floods of typical and positive light around. After about an hour a Franciscan monk appears on the stage, blows out the lights, and lets down a curtain, terminating the exhibition in a most primitive manner.

Opposite this stage, for ten successive days after Christmas, little children, previously instructed by the monks, mount on a kind of wooden pulpit, erected beside a column, and pronounce a discourse, or sermon, on the subject of the divine Saviour's lowly birth and humble infant years. Some of the children (all of whom are very young) perform their part admirably, and are full of fire and animation. They gesticulate with an energy, and scream with a vigour of lungs, quite Italian, as they stand opposite the mildly-illuminated Presepio, and point with their tiny fingers towards the image of Him through whom they, as well as ourselves, can alone find redemption.

Immediately over the high-altar is a curious inscription, in large golden letters, recalling a miracle remarkable in the mediæval history of Rome. "*Regina Cœli latare alleluia*" is engraven there, and thus runs the chronicle:—In the reign of Gregory the Great, that sainted and exalted Pope, a horrible pestilence ravaged the city. To intercede with the Almighty for his afflicted servants, a great procession was formed on Easter Sunday, A.D. 596, from the church of the Ara Cœli to St. Peter's, situated at extreme and opposite ends of the city, to implore mercy, and call on the people generally to repentance. The pontiff himself headed the assembled thousands, and as the sacred

pageant passed over the bridge and under the tomb of Adrian on the opposite side of the Tiber, celestial voices were heard in the air singing, "*Regina Cœli latare alleluia,*" the Pope and the vast multitude responding, as if by inspiration, "*Ora pro nobis.*" Gregory, it is said, beheld an angel radiant with celestial effulgence sheathing a fiery sword. That very day the plague ceased; in memory of which miraculous event a procession takes place every year on St. Mark's day. A statue of bronze, representing an angel sheathing a sword, was placed on the summit of Adrian's tomb, ever afterwards named, in memory of the vision, Castel San Angelo; the words "Regina Cœli" were incorporated by the Catholic Church into her offices; and the inscription I have mentioned was engraved on the arch over the high-altar in the church of the Ara Cœli.

But I have yet to mention another curious legend before leaving this church, so venerable by its ecclesiastical traditions. To the left of the high-altar I was shown a chapel dedicated to Helena, the mother of Constantine, and I read another inscription which excited my curiosity. It was in Latin, and stated that the chapel was called Arà Cœli, and was erected on the very spot where the Virgin appeared in a vision to the Emperor Augustus. This curious tradition arose from the following circum-

stance:—Augustus is said to have demanded of the oracle of Apollo "who after him should be the master of the world." The oracle was silent. Again, a second time, he offered sacrifice, but the god deigned no reply. At length, still pressed by the emperor, after a solemn pause, it spake and said, "That a Jewish Child, God himself, and the Master of gods, is about to drive Apollo from his seat; therefore expect no longer any answers from his altars." Augustus, astonished and confounded at the reply, retired, and immediately caused an altar to be erected on the Capitol, bearing the inscription, "*Ara primogeniti Dei.*" At the end of three days he beheld in a vision a virgin of surpassing beauty seated on the altar, holding a child in her arms, while a voice proclaimed, "*Hæc ara Filii Dei est;*" and therefore, it is said, Augustus would allow no one afterwards to call him a god.

History informs us that a Sibyl (the Tiburtine) lived in early days at Tivoli, the ruins of whose beautiful temple, overhanging the precipice and water-fall, still remain. An oracle is known to have existed there as late as the time of the Emperor Adrian, who consulted it during his residence at his far-famed villa, whose gigantic ruins still extend over the plain at the foot of the neighbouring mountains. As to the vision which is said to have visited Augustus, it is no more incre-

dible than the universally admitted fact that his successor, Constantine, was favoured with a similar miraculous revelation. Why not, therefore, Augustus? especially when the traditions of the East and West plainly pointed to the coming of the future Messiah.

I cannot tell how these legendary facts, half history, half tradition, read at a distance, but I can only say that, studied on the spot, supported by contemporaneous monuments, and consecrated by long ages of profound and unhesitating belief, they are very convincing.

III.

The Holy Week—The "Miserere"—The Lavandaia—The Cena—The Sepulchre—Castel Fusano—Ostia—Modern Readings of Virgil.

EVER since Christmas, and even before, I had heard about "the ceremonies of the Holy Week," until I was weary of the words. The crowd, the difficulty of obtaining tickets, the hours to be passed in waiting, the music of the "Miserere," all were so minutely discussed, so dinned into my ears by old and experienced Anglo-Romans, that at last I mentally resolved not to go at all, but to read instead some *catalogue raisonné* of the whole affair, and swear I was "charmed, delighted, rapt, inspired."

I have a general dislike to all grand religious ceremonies, where "the world, the flesh, and the devil" assert their unwelcome presence amid pillared aisles, hallowed sanctuaries, consecrated altars, and venerable tombs.

On such occasions the imposing ceremonial too often sinks into a mere dramatic representation; the music degenerates into sounds harsh and wearisome, "like

sweet bells jangled out of tune;" and all those religious sympathies which ought to be excited—love, gratitude, and adoration—are utterly silenced or rudely offended. Of all crowds in the world, an English crowd is the most uncompromising and unsympathetic; indeed, the English, during the Holy Week at Rome, have become quite historical from their remarkably bad behaviour.

When, however, the Holy Week really came, and all was bustle and excitement and tip-top curiosity, and the old walls rang to the wheels of countless carriages bearing freights of black-robed, black-veiled women, I thought I should be a fool not to join the throng, and, being at Rome, not "to do as Rome did;" so I sent for tickets, donned my sable suit, and set forth with the multitude to St. Peter's.

The ceremonies occupy every day, and every night too, I verily believe, during the entire week. How the priests live through it all, working and fasting, is an enigma; but they manage to survive, and come out at Easter as rosy and plump as ever. The Sistine Chapel, where the "Tenebræ" and "Miserere" are performed on the two days preceding Good Friday, is besieged by thousands of infatuated females for hours before the services begin, all struggling to

obtain a front position on the forms placed behind the screen in the lower half of the chapel, which (as this, the private oratory of the Pope, is supposed to be inaccessible to women) are pushed back as far as possible.

I, for my part, took the whole affair with great composure, and walked quietly up the Sala Regia about four o'clock. The ascent was beset with Swiss guards, their brilliant uniforms and glancing steel accoutrements looking exceedingly picturesque and mediæval; hundreds of ladies in black, gentlemen in evening dress, and militia and military heroes in full uniform trooped up this truly magnificent and regal entrance to the countless splendours of the Vatican, all laughing, talking, and joking with quite praiseworthy forgetfulness of the solemn nature of the anniversary. Some ladies tried to smuggle in camp-stools under their petticoats —a *ruse* instantly detected and ruthlessly exposed by the all-seeing officials; while others, coming in greater numbers than their tickets allowed, were remorselessly sent back, spite of lamentations and reproaches in unmistakably Anglican-Italian.

It was a scene of confusion, irreverence, and frivolity; men pushing onwards, and recklessly separating groups of terrified ladies; guards pouncing on delinquents; and bold mammas dragging their staring

daughters past quiet foreigners—Catholics, of course—who looked round all aghast at their irreverent haste and thoroughly English rudeness.

Arrived at the Sala Regia—at the summit of the stairs from whence both the Sistine and Pauline Chapels open—the scene grew ten times wilder. That lofty hall, so nobly proportioned, the walls glittering with frescoes and gilding, and adorned with rich clustered branches of magnificent candelabra—where on ordinary occasions unbroken silence reigns, and the very odour of sanctity floats around—a spot of reverent waiting and awful expectation, whether to the Catholic about to visit the shrine sanctified by the constant presence of Christ's vicar, or to the artistic devotee viewing for the first time the immortal works of Michel Angelo and his predecessors—that majestic and suggestive hall which, as I write, rises before me in all its pomp, shaded by a chastened light, half concealing, half displaying the great frescoes and the mysterious doors, some veiled by falling curtains, others opening into endless corridors and galleries, is now, alas! desecrated into a street thoroughfare!

Thousands of men and women, gathered from the four quarters of the globe, are rushing about, crowding every space, treading on each other's heels, talking, wondering, pushing; every face turned towards the

open door, with its ample drapery of crimson, leading into the Sistine Chapel, which they are all firmly resolved to enter at all risks. And though that door is guarded by military—obstinate Swiss guards, who, if Venus herself fresh from Olympus, or all the Circes and Armidas that ever existed in fact or fable, tried to cajole, would not budge one single inch—still, so vast is the crowd, its own weight carrying it irresistibly onward, that all slowly disappear under the overhanging curtain.

Every one knows that the Sistine Chapel is not large. Imagine, then, what it must be when, in the space assigned to the public—in which five hundred might commodiously sit—ten thousand persons are, by some miracle of crushing, collected. Imagine the heat, the squeezing, the elbows poked into one's sides, the furious glances, the hatred, malice, and uncharitableness of all those living beings, each wanting to see and to hear; and all, save a few in the front, effectually prevented from doing either, and furiously incensed in consequence. I doubt if the pagan audience collected in the Flavian Amphitheatre to see men torn by wild beasts could be more savage. For myself, I, symbolically speaking, gave up the ghost in terror and dismay, but by good luck getting pushed against the side of the ladies' box, I carefully kept my place, and tried to

collect my senses. This box, or enclosure, was as full as stuffing could make it, and the heat excessive. At the entrance, one of the Papal camerieri, dressed in doublet, hose, and high Elizabethan ruff, kept up a show of order. Still more ladies would keep crowding in, despite his remonstrances.

"*Le prego, le supplico, signora*"—("I beg, I implore you, madam")—whispered he; "*di non montare, non c'è posto, è pieno*"—("there is no room").

"*Mais,*" says some English mamma with two lean daughters, "*vous pouvez faire un po di place je suis sûre pour questa signora,*" pushing forward first one, then the other daughter.

"*No, madama,*" replies the. cameriere angrily; "*impossibile.*"

"*Mais, moussu,*" says a fat old lady, who has been perseveringly elbowing her way upwards, and has, spite of all opposition, firmly planted her foot on the prohibited steps, "*je vois une place—un posto, là, là*— let me go!" And she makes a dash forwards.

"*No, signora,*" again replies the cameriere, placing his arm across the opening, which the belligerent lady disregarding, pushes madly aside; and a struggle—yes, actually a struggle—begins, ending in the signal defeat and consequent retreat of the fat lady, who is violently landed on the ground, looking extremely

red and furious; the cameriere, excited and scarlet also, exclaiming in a low voice, "*Ma, corpo di Bacco!* must I then call in the *carabinieri* against these *Inglesi?*"

Yet, though sorely persecuted, he was a jewel of a man, that same cameriere; for, seeing me standing quite quiet and resigned at the foot of the steps for a long time, he took pity on me, and, touching my arm, motioned me to mount into the *palco* (box)—a signal I was not slow in obeying, whispering *tanti ringraziamenti* into his ear, at which he nodded and smiled, then firmly replanted his arm over the entrance, giving a scowl round at the female harpies who stood and watched with cat-like eagerness for the slightest relaxation of his vigilance to rush upwards. Once in the *palco*, I was better off. A kind lady shared her seat with me. I could breathe and look round.

Neither the Pope nor the cardinals were visible. The Gregorian chant, in which the Psalms are sung, had begun, and the lights, fixed on a triangular stand near the altar, were burning. This stand, typical of the Trinity, holds fifteen lights, one of which is extinguished at the conclusion of each psalm. This usage is explained by some as symbolising the prophets, who were persecuted and successively put to death before the coming of the Saviour; others represent it as

signifying the abandonment and desertion He suffered from all his disciples in his last hours. The last light is not extinguished, but withdrawn behind the altar, in allusion to the Saviour's entombment and subsequent resurrection; the "Tenebræ" being an office of mourning commemorating the death of the Redeemer, while its triple celebration is in allusion to the three days during which his body remained in the tomb. The music is entirely vocal, and intensely monotonous, for, by some unexplained etiquette, the organ is never heard in the presence of the Holy Father. It is a want nothing can supply. No pomp, no gorgeous spectacle can compensate for the absence of that thrilling, overwhelming burst that carries the soul upwards in a rushing torrent of delicious harmony. St. Cecilia is said to have invented the organ in a moment of ecstatic inspiration. It is a pretty legend, and fitly symbolises the heavenly influence of that noble instrument. But to return. Suffocated, cramped, and confused, it seemed to me the Psalms would never end. Impatience became general, and everybody around was perpetually popping up and down to see how many lights remained. "Now there's only two left," I heard. "Now there is only one!" As the moment approached for the commencement of the "Miserere," the excitement increased ten-

fold. Fresh crowds pushed in through the door, determined, *coûte que coûte*, to storm the barriers of half-fainting women. Some retreated; some were borne out insensible, the guards coming to their rescue; others firmly stood their ground. Again the fight began with the old ladies and the chamberlain, and again he victoriously repulsed their assault. All the lights had disappeared; evening was darkening into night; the chapel lay wrapped in a dim, subdued twilight, the audience massed into grey and black shadows; the glorious roof, painted by Michel Angelo, became indistinct and misty. . . . . It was an hour of solemn communing and awful contemplation, met, as we seemed, on the threshold of the tomb to celebrate the cruel abandonment of the Divine One, surrounded by typical darkness and lamentations, prefiguring the agony of his soul, when the bitter cry was wrung from Him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

After a brief pause the first long-drawn notes of the "Miserere" echoed through the gloom—soft, unearthly, spiritual—sounds as of celestial souls suffering the torments of the damned, and calling on heaven and earth to listen while they breathed forth their agony. Now a high note struck on the ear, thrilling in its acuteness — a note suggestive of

corporeal suffering from an incorporeal being. As it died away, other voices took up the wailing strain, breaking off like the first in vague, melancholy sighs. Then came a convulsive thrill, a quivering shake in the sad minor key in which the whole is sung, followed by a few notes of delicious cadence, rich and flowing, as if a glimpse of heaven—an angel visit—had for a moment broken the spell of torture. Brief respite! Again sounds the same piercing cry, and again it floats away into unutterable voiceless chaos. As the sad strains swelled in tearful modulations, the shadows deepened, and night came to shroud, as it were, and bear them in her sable bosom to the realms above, where angels wept as they listened, and all the glory of heaven grew dim at the remembrance of the Saviour's agonies.

Still, spite of the exquisitely touching and profoundly devotional character of the "Miserere," the unaccompanied music becomes after awhile tedious and monotonous. On the whole, I was disappointed; and I decidedly consider the effect more singular than beautiful. When all was over, came the dreadful crush to get out—the cruel, irreverent crush—as dangerous as it was intolerable. I, for my part, was completely lifted off my feet, and found myself flung violently down into the centre of the Sala Regia, where, by

good luck, I landed safely. The hall was exactly like the crush-room of an opera, for the Protestant mob, as eager to get out as they had been to get in, forgot all decency in their haste. Shame on the foreigners who thus desecrate the solemn offices of a Christian Church, worshipping a common Saviour, and commemorating a common salvation through his sufferings! Shame on their irreverent curiosity and stolid indifference!

To-day, Thursday, although occurring in the midst of the profoundest mourning, is considered by Catholics a devotional festa of joyous solemnity, as being the day on which our Lord instituted the Eucharist. Mass is celebrated in the Sistine Chapel. The Pope afterwards, passing in grand procession through the Sala Regia, bears the host to the Pauline Chapel, and places it on what is called "the Sepulchre"—namely, the altar, which on this occasion symbolises the sacred tomb. In the afternoon all the world throngs to St. Peter's to see the Lavandaia, which is arranged in this wise. Along one side of the transept, terminating in the chapel of SS. Processio e Martino (the gaolers of SS. Peter and Paul, who were there converted by the Apostles during their imprisonment in the Mamertine prisons), on a high platform, were placed thirteen men—pilgrims, I believe—dressed in the most curiously antique costume

imaginable, looking in the far distance exactly like a group by Giovanni Bellini or Francia, or some other of the early masters. They were all in white, with high conical caps, and at their back was suspended a magnificent piece of tapestry representing the "Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci. Why there should be thirteen apostles I cannot explain, but I can certify to the number.

After being pushed about for some time in the crowd, a general buzz, turning of heads, clashing of arms, and echoing of heavy steps along the marble floor, announced the arrival of his Holiness. His throne was erected upon the altar of the adjacent chapel; and here Pius, after a short delay, appeared on a level with the mysterious apostles, who really outdid "patience on a monument" in rigid immovability. Vocal music burst forth from a hidden choir, his Holiness the while laying aside his outer vestments, and being girded by an attendant cardinal with a linen apron. He then moved towards the apostles, followed by the dignitaries of his court, while one of the cardinals chanted from the Gospel of St. John the passage describing the act of our Saviour's humility now to be commemorated. The ceremony of washing the apostles' feet occupies but a very short time. The Pope lightly touches them with a towel (after the attendant deacon had

poured water on them), then stoops and kisses them; after which each apostle is presented with a nosegay.

As soon as the English ladies have seen one foot washed, they rush off like demoniacs towards the Sala Regia in the Vatican, to secure places for the Cena, which immediately follows; those who witness both being considered to have achieved a real feat of generalship. When the *Lavandaia* was over, the Pope disappeared, and I made my way along with the vast crowd into the mighty vestibule and up the Sala Regia. A more quiet, polite crowd I never beheld—all being anxious to proceed, yet none doing so at the expense of his neighbour; a silent seriousness was expressed in every face; they remembered they were in a church, and that we had all met there to celebrate the symbolical representation of a Christian mystery. All honour to the Catholic crowd after the painful exhibition of the Sistine Chapel! When I reached the Sala Regia and rejoined the foreigners, the Babel-like confusion recommenced. Here thousands were struggling and disputing, and rushing to and fro like mad. The immense hall where the Cena is laid out was crammed to suffocation. There were the black-veiled ladies in enclosed seats; and in their train the same noise, folly, and irreverence as on the pre-

ceding day; Swiss guards trying to keep the peace, and signally failing in the endeavour; distressed camerieri and bumptious old ladies. I found favour in the eyes of an old sergeant of the Swiss guard by addressing him in German: he forthwith took me under his wing, and led me on until I was placed close to the bar separating the audience from the space appropriated to the Cena. Here I saw capitally. A long table was spread with fruit and sweets, and elegantly decorated with high vases of flowers, superb pieces of plate, and thirteen statuettes of the apostles. Around sat the mediæval gentlemen, who by some miracle seemed to have been removed from the basilica below and placed here. The Pope, simply dressed in white, his benignant face beaming with that placid smile peculiar to him, moved quietly about the table, without fuss or effort. I remembered Abraham and the angels as I looked on the heavenly expression of his countenance, and thought that he too might be worthy to entertain "an unbidden guest" unawares. "The servant of the servants" of God was the distinguishing title of one of the greatest popes who ever sat on the throne of St. Peter, and Pius is really worthy of that touching appellation. The ceremonial of the Cena was very simple. He first bore water to the apostles in a silver basin; then, after the "Benedicite,"

bishops and prelates, advancing from the end of the hall, presented to him various dishes, which he handed to the apostles, pouring out water and wine at intervals. The gentle anxiety with which he anticipated their wants was inexpressibly touching. He was evidently wrapped in mental devotion, and was only alive to the outward scene as far as it assimilated with and assisted his thoughts. Never, when encircled by all the gorgeous pomp of his splendid court, crowned with the triple diadem and glittering with jewels, had the Pope so much impressed me.

The office of the "Tenebræ" again takes place this evening in the Sistine Chapel, when the altar is divested of every ornament; the very carpets and hangings are removed; the Pope's chair is left without a back or a morsel of cloth on which to place his feet; the altar is hung with black; the crucifix is covered; and six candles are alone left to light up the doleful scene. Not wishing to encounter the crowd, I did not enter the Sala Regia until so late that I found it almost empty, every one having pressed into the portal or on the steps of the Sistine Chapel, from whence the soft wailing of the voices floated dreamily in the air above the hum of the pent-up thousands standing between me and the choir. At the opposite extremity of the hall a waving drapery undulated before the door of

the Pauline Chapel, and a twilight, as of half-discerned stars, faintly lit up the surrounding darkness. Drawing aside the curtain, I entered. All was in the deepest, the most solemn gloom, save the altar or sepulchre as it is called, around which knelt a dark circle of almost invisible worshippers. But that illuminated sepulchre, how can I find words to describe its dazzling splendour? Never did the hand of man more bravely symbolise the immortal glories of the divine tomb than in this stupendous mountain of glittering light. Mounting to the lofty ceiling, extending on either side into the gloom in circles and clusters and festoons of countless lights, there it rose, a glimmering, quivering, overwhelming mountain of brightness. The effect was thrilling. Tears rushed into my eyes, and Protestant though I am, *I* too knelt in the dark circle beside the glittering sepulchre, and remembered with awe the sacred symbol that rested within!

Afterwards I descended into St. Peter's. The portals were thrown wide open, and a few pale torches planted up the central aisle made darkness visible. The grand skeleton of the building alone emerged from the gloom, vast and boundless as the firmament, but a firmament unlit by moon or stars, and wrapped in everlasting night. The clustered pilasters, the colossal statues, loomed out in dim masses—gigantic forms, dreamy, fabulous,

vague, fading away in fathomless distance. Here and there a momentary ray of light glimmered from the torches, was visible for a moment, and then faded away and was gone. There was something quite terrific in the scene, linking the mind to the wildest visions of chaotic gloom. Yet, even in this utter darkness, one bright symbol cheered the Christian; for, concealed behind the massive pilasters supporting the cupola, a flood of light burst from the illuminated sepulchre, shining like a beacon, and beckoning the soul onwards through the dark valley with the bright hope of immortality.

At midnight we went to the convent of the Sacred Heart on the Pincian Hill. The door was cautiously opened by one of the French *religieuses* by whom the convent—an educational and charitable institution—is conducted. She scanned us long and inquiringly as we stood on the threshold, but, knowing my voice, at length admitted us. We crept softly into the church by a side chapel, not to disturb the solemn service which had already commenced. The church, a large and well-proportioned building, was dimly lighted. Many worshippers knelt on the marble floor; some were almost prostrate before the altar; others, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, lost in prayer. I never beheld a scene where such an *abandon* of

religious enthusiasm prevailed. The midnight hour, the darkened church, the affecting recollection of the awful event which they had met to commemorate, seemed present with all. Service was going on; but no word was spoken, either by the priest or by the congregation—not a sound, save a stifled sigh, broke the silence. Behind the high and solid iron bars, forming a screen between the body of the church and the *sanctum sanctorum* of the high-altar, seats were placed. Presently a dark-robed, white-veiled figure glided noiselessly in; another and another rapidly followed, each taking her place opposite the altar. Now a group would emerge from the recess behind the altar, then a single figure, and again a whole cluster of black forms, passing on like a vision of shadowy ghosts. It was all so dreamy and unearthly I more than once passed my hands across my eyes to make sure that I was awake.

Such was the number of white-veiled nuns that went floating by, that an hour had elapsed before they were all assembled. The front of the altar and the steps had then become filled, the richly-robed priest, his face turned towards the altar, standing in the midst. The awful stillness grew at last positively oppressive. One by one this sombre throng received the eucharist, bowed to the altar, and retired as noiselessly as

she had entered. When all were gone, the priest turned towards the kneeling congregation, who advanced to the screen and received the sacrament. I never shall forget that night; it rests on my memory like a peep into the very courts of heaven.

Although launched in the midst of the Holy Week, I must delay no longer to chronicle a happy day we spent last Monday, for fear the glowing impression should diminish.

I had heard much of the beauty of the *Pineta*, or pine woods of Castel Fusano, and I wished also to see Ostia, out of reverence for its classical associations. I do not care what antiquarians say. I throw down my glove to all of them. I can read Virgil as well as they, and I never will believe that Æneas landed at Porto d'Anzio, or anywhere else than at Ostia, where the localities so exactly tally with Virgil's description. So an excursion to Castel Fusano was arranged, which was to combine the delights of luxuriant Nature and classic memories—food for the head and the heart, not forgetting the poor body, which was cared for in a large basket, stowed away under the seat of the carriage; for the ethereal essences of our immortal being would have cut but a poor figure during a long spring day without the assistance and support of those much-abused but necessary accessories.

We left Rome by the Porta San Paolo, otherwise Ostiensis—one of the most picturesque entrances into the dear old city, rebuilt by Belisarius—flanked by the pyramid of Caius Cestius and the high turreted walls and towers beyond. And now we are driving along Tiber's banks into a pathless wilderness of green, with nothing but the white mass of the Pauline Basilica to break the monotonous lines.

We were a quartet, S. W—— again standing for Sculpture in a very pleasant form, and H——s for Architecture; and C——, fresh from England, and myself; all young and enthusiastic, full of fancies and wild theories; so well crammed, indeed, with Virgil and the graceful legends of old Greece, that we were little better than pagans for the time being. We first began by talking ourselves hoarse about architecture; then we as rapidly discussed sculpture; and at last, tired of chattering, settled down quietly to look at the Campagna. The soft morning air came balmily breathing across the aromatic turf, bearing rich odours of sweet herbs. Oh, those everlasting long lines! there they are again—the never-ending battle-fields I had so often traced, and of which the Campagna is literally a perpetual repetition.

Below is the broad open valley where one host lies encamped; above, the steeply-rising, undulating hills

where the enemy waits entrenched, to be scaled and taken ere the day is won, and the audacious Carthaginian or the savage Gaul driven back to whence he came. Over and over again the same scene occurs, especially in the lower parts of the Campagna, where the early conquests of the infant state were most fiercely contested. The sun shone brilliantly on that gracefully undulating plain leading down to the Hesperian strand; the birds skimmed rapidly over the verdant ground; and the classic Tiber, along whose banks we drove, curved and circled in many windings, now forming an island, now skirting a low wood, the reedy sedges rustling under overhanging trees. No snake ever lay more unquietly in the sun than did that broad river writhing across the plain. Sometimes we could discern three separate curves, the alternate strips of land and water lying terracewise before us, the broad belt of the Tyrrhene Sea circling all like an azure zone.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed H——s, as the sea first came in sight. "It would be worth coming from England only to see so exquisite a view."

On the grassy green expanse, in the valleys and up the rifts of the hills, grew thousands of snow-white stalwart lilies, shooting up from masses of waxy leaves. They were unlike any other lilies I had ever seen—so

grandly beautiful, with a certain strange look, as if the fairies must meet under the shadow of their dark leaves on moonlight nights to dance fantastic measures, and hold trysts with their sisters the butterflies and bright-winged beetles. These stately flowers could tell, I am sure, many a tale of Oberon and Titania and their tiny court when they hold high revel under the moonlight in still summer nights. Beside the lilies grew the purple Judas-trees, shedding thousands of ruddy leaves to the breeze. We were such children that we jumped out and filled the carriage with flowers, assisted by an old beggar who implored us, "by the tears of the Madonna," to give him a *bajocco*, in return for which he wished us all in paradise—a wish in which we, sinners as we were, being very happy on earth, profanely did not join.

Sixteen long miles lay between Rome and Ostia—the very voyage the "goddess-born" Æneas undertook when, warned by the god Tiberinus of impending danger, he committed himself and his companions to the "azure current." After we had accomplished the first half of the distance, we lost sight of "the noble river that rolls by the walls of Rome," and entered a woody copse. Straight as an arrow the road cleaves the low trees, until, gradually descending, we at last emerge, after many miles, on a lonely, desolate region,

neither sea nor land—sandy, uncultivated, barren, indicative of sea, but with no sea visible—a repulsive, melancholy scene, rank with weeds and reeds. There are still several large square tanks, or ponds, covered with white brine (salt-pits) in the same place where they were formed, B.C. 121, at the mouth of the Tiber, in the reign of Ancus Martius, as recorded by Livy. The road runs on a low terrace. Between these ancient marshes a large machicolated tower appears, evidently mediæval, built by the warlike Julius della Rovere—pope and warrior—to defend the coast, over which war and rapine and ruin had swept for centuries. This old tower, standing out alone among the ugly salt-pits, with a few wretched houses grouped about it, is Ostia—a plague-stricken place, sombre, gloomy, and sad, as though a curse rested on it.

C——, who had just arrived from London, was wild at having his romantic ideas so rudely scattered. "What!" cried he, "is this Ostia — the cradle of Rome—the harbour where the 'Dardanian chief' landed—where he won and wedded the daughter of the Latin king? What a sin!—what a shame that it should be allowed to sink into such undignified ruin! One can neither see the river nor the sea—abominable!"

I was, by experience, somewhat accustomed to these

disappointments, Italy being a country in which I had often philosophised on Juliet's theme of "What's in a name?" This, then, was the once beautiful Ausonian shore, girt by the Tyrrhene Sea, "where Æneas descried a spacious grove, through which Tiberinus, god of the pleasant river Tiber, with rapid whirls and quantities of sand discoloured, bursts forward into the sea. All around and overhead various birds, accustomed to the banks and channel of the river, charmed the skies with their songs, and fluttered up and down the grove. Thither he commands his mates to bend their course and turn their prow towards land."

"And now," said H——s, who had read to us this passage from Virgil, "'the Lydian river' that skirted Etruria's frontiers has disappeared, the groves are cut down, the birds have turned into croaking frogs, as noisy as if just transformed by Latona, and only the discoloured salt and the all-choking sand remain. I wish I had not come."

But I, for my part, rejoiced to see the spot identified with Virgil's fabled hero, however changed by the accumulated sand of so many centuries, and notwithstanding the undeniable fact that the present *paese* of Ostia was rebuilt by Gregory XIV. at a distance of more than a mile from the ancient city. One therefore looks in vain for any fragments of King Latinus's old town,

where he ruled in everlasting peace; the stately palace of Picus, raised on a hundred columns, and containing the statues of the ancient kings, Italus, and Sabinus, and old Saturn, "planter of the vine," and double-faced Janus. Gone, too, is the temple where the virgin Lavinia kindled the holy altars, and gone the ancient elms on the banks of the Sacred Stream, where the milk-white sow farrowed her litter of thirty young. Really, allowing for "poetical license," and with all possible respect for Virgil, I do think it was a very impertinent thing of the newly-arrived Æneas to begin building a city without even asking leave; and so good old King Latinus seemed to think also, when he saw them marking out the walls and trenches.

The once "Hesperian strand" is now inhabited by swarms of the most unpleasant beggars draped in filthy rags, with pale, fever-stricken faces. These squalid inhabitants of modern Ostia gathered round us as we halted by the side of the gate, under the shadow of the fine old mediæval tower. A barefooted Franciscan friar, bearing a wallet, came and begged too; and troops of old women, as hideous as "baleful Alecto" when she rose from hell to torment the soul of Amata, clustered round our carriage, the classic distaff in their hands.

The road from Ostia to the famous pine forest is such

a mere track, so rough and rugged and sandy, bordered by such ditches and holes, that it would be impracticable for a carriage anywhere but in Italy. The horses contrived, however, after immense efforts, to drag us through. At one moment we were hoisted on high, then we rolled down into the depths of a mighty rut, jolted and shaken to death. On either side of this primitive road extended luxuriant, unenclosed corn-fields, stretching away towards the woody distance we had traversed—a rich and fertile prospect, extending to the foot of the Alban Hills, where many towns and villages dot their purple sides, while above tower the loftier mountains of the Abruzzi. The pine wood was bounded by a stagnant canal, whose unwholesome waters had become an aquatic garden. Gigantic reeds overmantled tangled masses of white and yellow water-lilies, meadow-sweet, and other sweetly-scented flowers. A moment more and we were within the deep shade of the solemn pine wood. No underwood or shrub broke the smooth level of delicate turf, or impeded our view of the lofty knotted trunks which so bravely supported their rich superincumbent masses of sombre foliage. Mysterious trees these, with murmuring branches that whispered, as it seemed to me, of far-off ages, when Feronia ruled the woods. An aromatic perfume

scented the air, the natural incense Nature flings around her altars. Yes, this pine wilderness was beautiful.

Not far from the entrance to the forest stands in a spacious opening a castellated villa belonging to the Chigi family, interesting as the former site of Pliny's Laurentine villa. It is a residence and a fortress, the solid square pile flanked by turreted towers and loopholes, while above rises a central campanile, at once a citadel and a belvidere, for enjoyment and for defence. In our civilised age, and in a season of profound peace, such precautions may appear excessive, but situated as this villa is in a forest so near the sea, exposed alike to the attacks of banditti and pirates, they are far from being unwise or ridiculous.

Long glades open in every direction, heavy with deep shadows of the pines, whose spreading tops glistened blue under the ardent sun. H——s's fancy could run wild here, for we were amid the undoubted remains of the primeval Laurentine forest, worthy by its beauty of being associated with the poetic dreams of the Æneid. Indeed, it was impossible not to find oneself linking every opening glade, or venerable tree, or overarching bower with some well-known episode in that immortal poem. The graceful legends of classic

Greece, transplanted from their native soil, found here a home fully adapted to develop each delicate thought, each elegant suggestion, of that rare old superstition that deified and poetised all that was lovely in Nature.

Before the casino or villa, on a grassy plateau, stood an altar surrounded by woods, a fit shrine to Picus or Faunus, or the nymphs and dryads who rove within these sacred shades. Here on the velvet turf the priests about to sacrifice to the sylvan deities might have lain on outspread sheep-skins, and slumbered through the sable night, waiting to commence their rites when the Aurora's shining feet first trod the threshold of the morn.

We turned into a lofty avenue of ilex, leading by a broad straight way paved with lava blocks towards the sea. Not a single shrub or tree of living green varied the peculiar colouring of these sacred woods, which stretched far away, dark, solemn, and mysterious; the distant waves softly murmuring beyond. It was a scene as of another world—calling forth other centuries and other races, and invoking an old poetic faith to people its recesses. We did not talk together, so unreal and strange was the solemn enchantment around. The ground was thickly overrun with rosemary, as in the time of Pliny (the delicate blue

blossoms loading the slender stalk), flowering daphne, wild myrtle, Venus's plant, and other aromatic herbs and shrubs, perfuming this temple of the sylvan gods, whose roof was the unclouded heavens, upheld by countless pillars of the rusty pine, leading away into colonnades and naves, shrines and sanctuaries of unspeakable beauty.

I can scarcely describe the strange fancies that haunt me among the evergreen pine and ilex woods of Italy, where a funereal veil, beautiful as night, descends over the radiant face of verdant Nature; for as night is to day, so are the dark shades of those solemn trees to the bright garish colouring of other forests. It has been said that there is a philosophy in the trunks of trees. The strange contortions of the olive, gnarled and knotted by the growth of centuries, have been instanced as displaying every phase and development of human passion—the grim, morose old man in hoary trees bowed with age; triumphant youth in the stalwart sapling, strong, and fresh, and vigorous, amorously wooing the soft breezes; the growing wrinkles and coming anxieties of middle life marked in the aspect of another still vigorous tree that yet waves aloft its ample boughs of bluish green, loaded with black fruit. But, for my part, I see nothing so characteristic among Southern trees as the ilex and

the pine, which are formed by Nature as if to express human passions. Dante himself must have been sensible of these picturesque associations when he represents the Harpies as wailing among the branches of dark pines, and ever and anon displaying their horrid faces from amid the leaves. To-day there was a heavy sighing sound in the wind as it passed over the pine-tops that recalled to me this poetic image. A mysterious fear came over me. I would not for worlds have plucked one of the branches that lay across our path. I am sure blood would have flowed, and that I should have heard the melancholy groan of some imprisoned spirit crying out, as did Piero delle Vigne in the "*Inferno*," "Why pluckest thou me?" ("*Perchè mi schianate?*")

We turned into some narrow winding paths among these thickly-tangled woods, fit regions for the unquiet spirits of those unhappy ones who died of unrequited love—Phœnician Dido haunting the shore inhabited by her lover; guilty Phædra hovering near Diana's neighbouring grove; or Procris and the disconsolate Eriphyle. Bright wild-flowers spangled the ground in this fragrant shade—the crimson anemone sprung from Adonis' blood, waxy cistuses, and the yellow broom. The sun had become oppressive, so we rested awhile in these dainty bowers where Feronia and

Herileus tend the mazy woods, and Flora triumphs in her verdant home. We remembered it was within these lonely wilds, under the fitful light of the pale moon, that Virgil's valiant hero Euryalus, caught in a cruel ambush, was overcome by the Volscians, and fell beneath their swords, "as when a purple flower cut down by the plough pines away in death." His companion, the faithful Nisus, cares not for life without him. Covered with wounds received in defending him from the Rutulians, he flings himself upon the body of his friend, and their souls descend together to the gloomy realms of Pluto. Hither Amata rushed when, incited by Alecto to oppose Lavinia's marriage with Æneas, she counterfeited the enthusiasm of Bacchus, and woke the woody depths with the inspiring cry, "*Evoe Bacchus!*" As Echo bears afar her cry, she is quickly followed by the Latin matrons, who abandon their homes and fly forth, wrapped in skins, unbinding the fillets of their hair, waving in their hands the vine-dressed spears, or bearing blazing torches, which they tear from the surrounding pines—a maddened troop that shout through the forest wild nuptial songs celebrating the marriage of the Latin maid with Æneas' detested rival, Rutulian Turnus. But the solitary echoes, silent for so many centuries, are unbroken now, save by the soft cooing of the turtle-doves

and the clear chirrup of the *cicale* among the leaves.

Lovely as it was to wander through the woods and weave unnumbered fancies under their classic shade, the hour warned us to proceed, and we returned into the majestic avenue leading to the shore. Beyond the forest lay a sandy belt overgrown with low fir-trees. We mounted a little sand-hill, and behold, there was the glorious ocean, its azure waves breaking on the yellow strand at our feet! Magnificent beyond imagination, beyond expression, was that burst. The boundless sea came before us like a newly-created element, glittering with beams of golden light, its deep blue waters putting the very heavens to shame. Not a ripple furrowed the surface of the deep, the water just broke in a creamy fringe against the tawny shore, and the dark lines of the Laurentine forest stretched far away towards Ardea, along the Circinian strand.

Old Neptune holds his court to-day, and all Nature combines to do him honour, as in the bygone time, when Dolphin, radiant in gold and azure scales, bore his amorous message to Amphitrite, dwelling deep in ocean's caves, where corals and pearls and sparkling shells strew the ground, and many-hued seaweeds wave in the blue depths.

Oh, Italy! dazzling daughter of the South, lying like a gorgeous flower on the ocean's shore, what visions dost thou invoke by land and sea!

But the happiest dreams must end. Our classical rhapsodies were rudely broken by discovering the lateness of the hour, and—shame to say, spite of the goddesses and the nymphs, and the winds and the waves—by the humiliating fact *that we were very hungry*. Even H——s, who had sat spell-bound in a sort of enchantment, was fain to confess "that the poor body called loudly on the merciless spirit to have pity on its wants." So we took refuge in the dreary hut of a charcoal-burner, and discussed our Italian meal of wine and fruit and cake in an upper chamber—a most musty, uncomfortable place after our Arcadian seat in the woods.

As we again approached the fine old tower at Ostia rising so grandly out of the surrounding desolation, other recollections occurred to me very antagonistic to the visionary worship I had been paying to the false gods of paganism. St. Augustine, the prop and pillar of the mediæval Church, has, in his affecting "Confessions," irrevocably connected his name with Ostia. It was here that he landed on first arriving from Africa, to be instructed and perfected in the Christian faith,

accompanied by his mother Monica, of whom he has left so interesting a description. After visiting Rome and Milan, where he was baptized by St. Ambrose, he desired to return to Africa and devote himself to the divine service in whatever path the providence of God might appoint. Again he found himself at Ostia with his mother and little brother; but the affectionate parent, who had so rejoiced in his conversion to the faith she had always professed, was not permitted to accompany him further. On that desolate strand Monica (canonised by the Romish Church) sickened and died, her parting admonitions to the future saint being faithfully detailed in the "Confessions"—touching and beautiful pages, descriptive of the calm resignation of the dying Christian.

It was at Ostia that St. Ignatius, the friend of Polycarp and disciple of St. John, landed when coming from his bishopric at Antioch to be massacred in the great Flavian Amphitheatre. A fond legend tells that Ignatius had seen the face of our Lord, and that he was the infant whom the Divine One embraced and set in the midst of his disciples, saying, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven." When Trajan visited Antioch, Ignatius was brought before him, and accused of seducing the people. When desired to sacrifice, he replied that "all the treasures of Trajan's empire

would not induce him to forsake the only true and living God."

"What talkest thou of God?" cried the emperor. "Thy God is dead on the cross. Our gods reign in Olympus."

Then Ignatius, much moved, replied—

"Your gods, O emperor! are vicious mortals, and as such have died. Jove is buried in Candia, Æsculapius was shot with an arrow, Venus lies in Paphos, and Hercules burned himself alive. These, great Trajan, are your gods."

So Trajan ordered his mouth to be stopped, and Ignatius was condemned to be sent to Rome and torn to pieces by wild beasts, as befitted an obstinate unbeliever.

Nor were historic associations wanting. I remembered how it was to Ostia that Marius fled when overcome by the troops of his rival, Sylla. Stained with the blood of the noblest Romans, he fled alone; for all had abandoned the now aged tyrant. A single friend, Numerius, awaited him in a small vessel, which after many mishaps and chances bore him to Carthage. Who does not remember the old school-room story of Marius receiving the message of the Roman governor who forbade him to set foot in Africa, and his reply, "Go tell thy master that thou hast seen

the exiled Marius sitting amid the ruins of Carthage?"

Ostia was to the emperors a suburban watering-place. They loved to sail up and down the Tiber in regal magnificence, the whole surrounding country decked out to do them honour. Old Claudius, the stupidest of hoodwinked husbands, built the port, and amused himself by loitering here while Messalina dragged the imperial purple in the filth of Rome. Hither her accusers came, and imparted to him the astounding fact that she had publicly married another man; to which he replied, like the fool that he was, "Am I an emperor?"

And in the old times, too, there were brave pageants at Ostia, such as when Paulus Æmilius, after his conquest of Macedon and the capture of King Perseus, landed there with his royal prisoner. Then was the stout old Roman who had driven all Greece before him carried up the Tiber "in a royal galley of vast size, rowed by sixteen tiers of oars, and decorated with Macedonian spoils, consisting not only of beautiful armour, but of tapestry and other artistic works which had been the property of the conquered king. Meanwhile, the banks of the river were covered with vast multitudes that poured out from Rome to do him honour." So writes pleasant Livy. Such, too, as on

that day .... But I have done. I feel I am again off on my Pegasus on quite another tack, one that would carry me as far as ever did the gods and goddesses of the Laurentine forest.

IV.

Visit to the Catacombs of San Calisto and the Church of San Sebastiano.

TO-DAY along the Appian Way — that *regina viarum* so inexhaustible in recollections, where every stone, every broken wall has its history, and forms a portion of the great mosaic of bygone centuries! Out by the tombs of the Scipios (where the famous marble sarcophagus so long lay hid, deep buried in the gloom of long subterranean galleries)—out through the triumphal arch of Drusus, backed by the loftier pile of the Porta San Sebastiano, whose twin turreted towers deepen the shadows around! On, along the high, walled-in road, roughly paved, too, as though we were still struggling in the city—on, perhaps for two miles! Then I pass a low door overshadowed by trees, waving over a ruined mass, once a tomb, now wreathed and garlanded with luxuriant ivy. Beside that grove and that tomb, through that low door sheltered by those dark trees, is the entrance to the catacombs of San Calisto, whither I am bound,

but not to enter there. I go on a little way, and come to a church, which is that of San Sebastiano, standing in a piazza. There is nothing particularly venerable or ancient in its aspect, and yet it strikes me with a thrill, as a strange mysterious spot. Perhaps it is association, for I know that from this church I am about to descend into the catacombs, that living book, palpable and immortal, where is written in the blood of the martyrs, or with the unready pencil of some unknown artist, every detail of the painful, suffering, yet sublime lives of our Christian ancestors—a book without end, both for the Christian and the antiquarian! The monk who generally acted as guide not being forthcoming, I have time to look about me. The church stands on the fall of a hill, and is shaded by a whole grove of funereal cypresses, the only living trees appropriate to the dark memories around. In front there are an open space and a pillar; behind, a natural wall of tufa-rock of a fine rich tinge, as though warmed by centuries of bright sunshine, overwoven with ivy, weeds, and wallflowers matted and massed together, and fringed with festoons of hawthorn, just bursting into snowy wreaths, like Spring weaving garlands round the wrinkled forehead of old Time. Beyond, on the summit of another hill, stands the massive tomb of Cecilia Metella, that

"stern round tower of other days," the grandest monument of the Street of Tombs. I felt the most intense curiosity to explore these refuges, which served the early Christians, while living, as a hiding-place and asylum for themselves, their mysteries, their tears, their prayers; when dead, as a resting-place to all, especially to the sainted martyrs. The very designations given to them are suggestive of their destination, and full of holy poetry. Besides the more general name of catacombs, they are called "hidden places," "subterranean refuges," "councils of martyrs," "sanctuaries," "resting-places," "memorials," "peace," "havens," and "thrones." Could any but the devoted Christians have thus designated prisons and tombs filled with decaying mortality, where earth received the mangled remains yet palpitating with a life too often rudely destroyed, and the worm accomplished the melancholy mysteries of that sentence which delivers dust to dust, earth to earth? As Pompeii shows paganism as it existed in its religion, manners, arts, and customs, public and private; so the catacombs, the cradle of the Church, display Christianity as it existed eighteen centuries ago.

I entered the church, a spacious building, handsomely decorated, but without a single claim to antiquity, although it is the last of the seven Basilicas,

and was founded by Constantine. Some ill-disposed cardinal, however, stepped in about the middle of the last century, and destroyed every vestige of the past. Here is the tomb of San Sebastiano, under an altar bearing his name, where he is represented, in a marble statue of some merit, lying dead, pierced with silver arrows. The statue is by Giorgetti, pupil of Bernini, whose French taste may be better pardoned when it is remembered that Sebastiano was a Gaul born at Narbonne, and a soldier in the Roman armies. He suffered under Diocletian, who, discovering that he was a Christian, condemned him to be shot. When, covered with arrows and fainting from intense suffering, he was left for dead by his executioners, a pious widow who had obtained permission to bury him discovered that life was not extinct. Under her care he recovered from his wounds, but refused to fly from Rome, and shortly afterwards placed himself before the emperor, and publicly reproached him for the cruelties he exercised towards the Christians. Diocletian was at first overwhelmed with astonishment at the sight of a person he believed to be dead, but, recovering from his surprise, gave orders in great anger that Sebastiano should be seized immediately, beaten to death with cudgels, and his body thrown into the common sewer. This sentence was executed, but his remains were preserved

by a Christian called Lucina, who interred them where they were found, in the entrance of the catacombs of San Calisto. Opposite his altar an immense collection of relics is displayed, among which are the arrows extracted from his wounds: many others are there also, which I had not time to inspect, as the monk now approached who was to accompany me below, a brown-robed, barefooted friar, more akin to death, darkness, and the tomb, than to the living. He presented me with a small lighted taper, opened a door in the nave of the church, and after descending some twelve or fifteen steps, led me into the catacombs. A low arched passage cut in the pozzuolana rock opened to engulf us, and in a moment, save for the feeble glimmering of the tapers, we were in utter darkness. Labyrinths of innumerable low galleries opened in every possible direction, while on either side of the gallery we traversed (which just allowed of our walking without stooping) appeared tier above tier of lateral excavations, sufficiently large to contain a human body. Here were crowded together the graves of old and young, children, soldiers, popes, martyrs, rich and poor, mingling their common dust; shelves, as it were, of wasting mortality, more instructive than a thousand volumes; for here the great page lies open to all who seek it, and he

who runs may read the end of hope, youth, life, joy, sorrow, disease, or martyrdom, traced by the finger of Time within this mighty charnel-house. At the beginning of the catacombs no bones are visible. They have all been removed as relics into different churches. Tenantless yawned the narrow graves which, when the last trumpet shall sound, will have nothing to render. The monk crept noiselessly on; a great silence reigned in the fathomless vaults, and a gloom, like the Egyptian darkness, *to be felt*. Not a plant, not a bird, not the smallest living animal, recalls one from the absolute picture of silent, impenetrable death around. How gloomy and horrible a prospect! how oppressive and soul-consuming, but for the immortal faith we share in common with the beatified saints whose bones populate these mournful shades!

Passage after passage, bordered by uniform ranges of sepulchres, opened on either side in a network of labyrinthine confusion, each so similar that but for the glimmer of the monk's taper I should have been lost in a moment. I recalled all the horrid stories I had ever heard of people lost in these monumental caverns; and I trembled, for I felt that no dexterity, no calculation could ever extricate one from so complicated a maze. Once lost, all hope expires, and nought

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remains but to wander and wander on and on until exhaustion, hunger, and horror overcome the fated wretch, who at length, pillowed by a tomb, sinks down to die. I cannot describe the wild distorted fancies, the feelings of awe and wonder, that came over me as I followed the steps of the dark-robed monk through these intricate recesses. After awhile my apprehension and terror diminished. I remembered with gratitude that it is to this darkness and obscurity we owe (humanly speaking) the preservation of that religion which, having been treasured, as it were, for centuries in the bowels of the earth, was destined to reappear, triumphant, in the fulness of time, and to be proclaimed as the religion of the universe within the very temples of the false gods. Then were consecrated for Christian sacrifices the broken altars but a few years before resplendent with the gorgeous worship of the whole circle of Olympus. Inscrutable and past finding out are the ways of the Omnipotent, bringing forth vitality and immortality out of idolatry, darkness, and the tomb! What a picture do these dark vaults display of the devotion, the zeal, the love, of those early Christian converts whose baptism was blood! I pictured them stealing forth from the city in the gloomy twilight, out towards the lonely Campagna, and disappearing one

by one through well-known openings; threading their way through dark, sinuous galleries to some altar, where light, and life, and spiritual food, the soft chanting of the holy psalms, and the greeting of faithful brethren awaited them. The sight of these early haunts of the persecuted and infant religion is inexpressibly affecting, and I pity those, be they Protestant or Catholic, who can visit such hallowed precincts without an overwhelming emotion. How many martyrs (their bodies torn and lacerated by the cruel beasts, amid the infuriate roars of thousands shrieking forth the cry of "*Christianos ad leonem!*" in the bloody games of the Flavian Amphitheatre) have passed, borne by mourning friends, or by compassionate widows or virgins, to their last dark, narrow home, along the very path I was now treading! How many glorified saints, now singing the praises of the Eternal around the great white throne in the seventh heaven of glory, have been laid to rest in these very cells, lighted by the flickering taper that I held! But I must pause—this is an endless theme, endless as the glory of those who hover in eternal light and ecstatic radiance above; it is, moreover, a pæan I feel utterly unworthy to sing.

I wandered on, bearing my taper, close upon the noiseless steps of the monk. Sometimes we

descended narrow damp steps into lower stories, the walls of porous tufa still perforated with countless graves piled closely one above another; sometimes we ascended. In all, there are four separate stories in these catacombs, and the confusion of the labyrinth, after wandering for a little space, becomes perfectly overwhelming and distressing. Now and then we came upon an opening, where service was performed over the grave of some special saint, the tomb of the dead serving as an altar to the living. I could not but observe a striking similarity in these arrangements to those now existing in all the martyr churches of Rome. Antiquity at least, and the example of the primitive Church, are on the side of the Catholics. "The same slab," says Prudentius, "gives the sacrament, and faithfully guards the martyr's remains; it preserves his bones in the sepulchre, in hope of the Eternal Judge, and feeds the Tibricolæ with sacred meat. Great is the sanctity of the place, and near at hand is the altar for those who pray." Some of these chapels are extremely small and low; others comparatively large; but no fresco paintings are found in the catacombs of San Calisto. In one spot, after descending many steps to the very lowest story of the tier of catacombs, three chapels open into one another. In their immediate neighbourhood many passages

meet and intersect with tenfold confusion; but countless as are the galleries still open, the mouths of many more are closed to avoid danger. These chapels cannot fail deeply to impress the imagination as being the very *sanctum sanctorum* of the early martyrs, where they drank of that cup and tasted that immortal food which alone sustained frail mortality under the torments awaiting them. They are called "*Monumentum arcuatum*" from the arch over the tomb, leaving the flat portion of the slab at liberty for the celebration of the sacramental mysteries. Here, too, were held the "Agapæ," or love-feasts—not to be confounded, however, with the holier rite which Protestants accuse Catholics of having subsequently permitted to degenerate into masses for the dead—to be celebrated over, or near, their mortal remains. These were the days of the Church's humiliation, when, sharing the human nature of her Divine Master, she was predestined to be born in the flesh, and to begin her career in infinite nothingness. At this early period, according to the "Liber Pontificalis," the holy utensils for the celebration of the eucharist were of glass. The sole treasure possessed by the infant Church was bestowed by a Christian—a Christian senator, father of those holy virgins SS. Prassede and Pudenziana, whose names are deservedly honoured by the Church. This senator's

estate, and that of the Christian widow Lucina, formed the nucleus of the ecclesiastical possessions.

As I penetrated with the monk deeper and deeper into this mysterious region, I again felt alarmed at the solitude of my situation; my fears even prompted me to doubt his knowledge of the intricacies in which we were involved. But he soon silenced my apprehensions by his calm reply, "*Non abbia paura, signora.* For ten years I have lived here, more below than above the ground. I know every turn, every step so well, I could walk it in my sleep." "But," said I, seeing the taper flickering and waning ominously under the currents of damp air, "suppose our lights go out?" "*Non importa,*" replied he; "I could take you out safely without them." After this assurance I ceased to fear, and again abandoned myself to the strange impressions created by the consecrated gloom. The atmosphere in the catacombs is warm and pleasant, though somewhat close. I only perceived a feeling of damp when we descended to the fourth, or lowest story, and then but slightly. I saw many open graves containing what once were bones, but which, when exposed to the air, literally crumbled into a handful of dust. I also saw many unopened tombs. When an inscription or other outward indication invites curiosity, and the sepulchre is opened, within is found nothing but dust,

representing by its position the form of a human body. No indication remains of the bones, and even this faint evidence of the human form vanishes at the slightest breath or the gentlest touch. Sometimes a few bones remain, and it is not rare to find a sword or some other instrument indicative of martyrdom. Thus did the savage nations of the North place armour or portions of rich spoils in the tombs of their chiefs. But the lamp and the *ampolle*, or vessel filled with blood, are the clearest and most undeniable evidences of the martyr's resting-place; evidences, too, the most adapted to heighten the zeal and increase the faith of the living believers who behold them.

I was particularly interested in one chapel, where that most holy man, San Filippo Neri, justly called the Apostle of Rome, the founder of the Oratorians, had, during a period of ten years, constantly slept. San Carlo Borromeo, the great Milanese saint, another brilliant example of devoted charity and holiness, is also said to have passed many nights in these sacred solitudes. As we retraced our steps, the tomb of St. Cecilia was pointed out to me; the body has been removed into her church in the Trastevere, which I have already described; but the flat stone which enclosed it, engraven with her name and the par-

ticulars of her cruel death, still remains beside the open tomb, offering many suggestive recollections to those acquainted with her history. After threading mazy windings utterly confusing, we at last emerged at the foot of the stair leading into the church, beside the tomb of San Sebastiano, whose remains, when found here, were removed into the church above. Would that I could impress my readers with the solemn awe, the overwhelming feelings that visited my soul while wandering among the holy dead! At all events, my visit to the catacombs will stand forth, as I felt it, an epoch in my life—an event never to be forgotten!

V.

The Adoration—The Lateran—Mass of the Resurrection—Trinità dei Pellegrini—Two Anecdotes—The Environs of Rome—Rocca di Papa—Maria—Home Scenes.

I NOW resume my account of the Easter ceremonies. All Rome mourns to-day, as mourned the Virgin before the cross of Calvary. It is Good Friday, and an awful gloom hangs over the city. Every one looks sad and melancholy; an incessant tolling of bells strikes the ear; the churches are filled with worshippers, who kneel before the denuded altars and darkened shrines with every outward semblance of sorrow and repentance. "Assume a virtue if you have it not," says Hamlet. At least the very sight is edifying, as bringing forcibly to one's mind the solemn anniversary in which all Christians join.

During the mass in the Sistine Chapel, the Pope, discarding his crimson slippers and divesting himself of his cope and mitre, descends from his throne, and advances towards the crucifix on the altar, which is veiled in black. Three times he bows in adoration before the symbolic image of the Redeemer's passion;

then, prostrating himself, he reverently kisses the pierced feet, which are partially uncovered, whilst the whole choir intone the beautiful chant, "Venite, adoremus." Three times is this ceremony repeated, the harmony ascending each time in a higher key, until at the conclusion the entire figure on the cross is exposed. There is a dramatic yet deeply touching pathos in this rite, calculated to conquer the indifference of the most callous Protestant, and to make even a careless Catholic tremble. In the afternoon the "Tenebræ" are repeated for the third and last time, to the same vain and irreverent auditory. At its conclusion I went into St. Peter's, whither the Pope soon after repairs to adore the relics. An immense crowd was assembled. After awhile some guards, in handsome uniforms of blue, marched up the nave, forming a passage for the court, the Swiss Guard, and the Guardia Nobile. Last of all appeared Pius, always calm and benignant, but looking excessively heated and fatigued. When he had reached the Confessional (the subterranean tomb of the Apostles before the altar), he knelt at a desk prepared for him; then, taking in his hand a printed form of prayer, the relics were exposed from the gallery over the statue of Santa Veronica, illuminated for the occasion. When the ceremony was concluded, the Holy Father rose, drew

off his spectacles, put them in the pocket of his superb vestment, and retired, followed by his sumptuous court all glittering with crimson and gold. This ceremony did not impress me at all.

Saturday.—To-day I went with H——s to the Lateran. He was, as usual, instructive and entertaining, and eager to explain the devout significance of all we saw. He explained to me that the services of this day, commemorating the resurrection, are anticipated, so as not to be celebrated at midnight, as was the custom in the primitive Church. "The whole service," said he, "still supposes the time to be night. A source of the highest antiquarian interest," added he, "is to be found in the Catholic system of symbolism, which has appropriated from every source most pregnant and beautiful imagery and many typical forms. In the mystic significance of our ceremonies we are carried back to ages of which history only preserves imperfect records—to the wild mythology of the North, the profound mysticism of the East, to intellectual Greece and victorious Rome—each and all recalled by many of the external ceremonies of the Catholic ritual; for the Church—like the sun, which absorbs all other light—in appropriating those forms, has sanctified them to the loftiest and holiest purposes." I need not add that H——s is a devout Catholic.

In the meantime we arrived at the Lateran, where an immense number of white-robed young priests were assembled round the high-altar, this being the day when all the clergy are expected to communicate. The relics of St. Paul are exhibited. H——s, however, hurried me away to the old Baptistery near the basilica, in order to obtain a place for witnessing the christening. This circular building, which is not large, was densely thronged, the spectators being arranged on raised seats round the centre, where the large alabaster vase stands, used as a font by Constantine, and in which Rienzi is said to have bathed before assuming knighthood. The heat was so intense that it required some resolution to keep our seats. At last the procession appeared, preceded by incense-bearers and deacons. First came the officiating cardinal, in splendid vestments, and, following him, the two candidates for baptism—one a Jew, from the Ghetto, a sullen, morose sinner, who looked capable of committing murder or sacrilege for the value of a *scudo;* the other a young negro girl, as black as ebony, her bare woolly head of cropped hair giving her, but for her white drapery, much the appearance of a boy. There was something gentle and devout in her countenance and bearing, singularly contrasting with the stolid insensibility of her com-

panion, who stared round at the company with audacious eyes in a most unedifying manner. Much interest was felt for this negro girl. She had been brought as a slave from Africa to Leghorn, where she became a Christian, escaped from her proprietors, and was redeemed by that excellent fraternity the Trinitarians, which is ever on the watch at these seaports to help and protect the wanderer, the orphan, and the slave. The cardinal and deacons grouped themselves very picturesquely round the baptismal vase, and the ceremony began. Water was thrown on the head of the two neophytes. By one it was received with sullen indifference, by the other with devotional fervour. The negro girl's head was reverently bowed in earnest prayer, and she looked so deeply affected that I feared every moment she would faint.

As soon as the rite at the Baptistery was concluded, H——s, who had been quite touched by the earnest piety of the poor negro girl, hurried me off without the loss of a moment to St. Peter's. Service was proceeding in the choir when we entered; the altar was concealed by a black veil; a low, lugubrious chant told of mourning and desolation. But at a given signal a magic change took place; the *Gloria in Excelsis*, accompanied by the organ, burst forth in a rapturous pæan of

triumphant harmony; the veil before the altar was rent with a loud crash, displaying a magnificent tapestry of the resurrection of our Lord; the paschal candle (an enormous torch placed beside the altar) blazed forth; the deep-toned bells of St. Peter's rang out a joyous peal, responded to by every belfry in the vast city; and the cannon of the Castle of San Angelo boomed solemnly over all. What a rapturous burst it was when the Old World rose, as it were, to new life to greet her Saviour emerged from the tomb! A thrill, an electric shock, passed over the whole congregation. Happiness and devout joyfulness beamed in every face; loving, earnest eyes were turned towards heaven; every knee was bowed in solemn thanksgiving; while the exulting strains of the loudly-pealing organ seemed to carry up the soul in a bright stream of harmonious ecstasy. The *Gloria* was followed by a grand *Hallelujah,* chanted by the full strength of the beautiful choir; while the sculptured walls of the chapel, vaults, arches, and painted cupolas seemed actually to quiver and shake with the triumphant chorus of earth rejoicing over her risen Saviour!

The mass ended, every one turned to his neighbour, wishing him a *buona pasqua;* the canons advanced towards the officiating cardinal with the same salutation; the priests repeated it again to the canons and to

each other; beautiful flowers made their appearance, and were handed among the clergy from friend to friend with the same soul-stirring salutation. We passed out into the mighty aisles of the vast basilica, where thousands were saluting each other with a like holy greeting, and again bright flowers passed from hand to hand. An air of jubilee was on every face. Altars and shrines were now uncovered; the golden lamps before the Confessional were again lighted; cannon roared in the distance; musketry sounded; military music came floating through the entrance; the bells rang joyous peals—for the new year had begun, the sacred year when Jesus rose, and it was meet and fit that earth and all her children should rejoice!

In the evening we went to the Trinità dei Pellegrini, a *confraternità* founded by that most holy man, San Filippo Neri, for those pilgrims who desire to avail themselves of the indulgences conceded by the Church during the Holy Week, *ad limina apostolorum*. Each day during the Holy Week hundreds of men and women arrive, and are entertained for three days free of charge; and every evening lay members of the association, including all the illustrious of either sex in Rome, assemble here, wash the pilgrims' feet, and afterwards attend on them at supper.

We ascended an interminable staircase on the women's side of the building, situated in a close network of narrow streets in the neighbourhood of the Tiber, near the Farnese Palace. On entering the suite of apartments devoted to the female pilgrims, we found ourselves in the midst of light and life, bustle and activity. Many poor wayfarers, pale, dusty, and fatigued, were seated round the walls, staring inquiringly at the novel scene. They were generally of the very poorest class, but looked neat and clean, and were habited in the romantic mediæval dress with which ballads and legends invest all pilgrims — namely, the dark grey or black robe, the large cape sprinkled with cockle-shells, the broad-brimmed hat of straw or felt, sandalled shoes, a gourd, and a long staff. There is something very poetical about a dress that awakens so many romantic associations. Many visitors were present, passing from room to room; while the sisterhood of the convent, in dresses of grey serge and with white cowls, glided about, contrasting well with the noble ladies, members of the institution, who wore curious costumes of red and black, quite as strange and mediæval-looking as the dresses of the pilgrims themselves. What lovely faces I saw! what aristocratic features, brilliant eyes, and classical heads!

After a time a great crowd of visitors had collected in a long gallery, where, behind a railed-in space on either side, the tables were spread for supper. Here we waited until the press would allow of our descending to the apartment where the feet were washed. An old lady, the Countess M——, emerged from the crowd, leading forward her niece, a lovely girl affianced to the wealthy Marquis D——. "My niece," said the countess to my friend Madame L——, who, habited in the lay costume, stood near, "*vuol far qualche opera di misericordia*"—("wishes to perform some work of charity"): "may she assist?" Whereupon Madame L—— assented, and the beautiful girl, smiling and blushing, was arrayed in the prescribed dress of black, with great red sleeves and apron, and led away below to wash dirty feet, happy as a queen. After a due proportion of scuffling, crushing, and pushing (for many English were present), we also descended.

In the lower room sat between fifty or sixty most miserable-looking pilgrims, their feet and legs begrimed with travel-stains. To my thinking, these appeared ten times more wretched than those I had seen above, but it might be that the strong light thrown on them here from the lamps brought out all their soils in high relief. Their feet—but I will spare your feelings by not further mentioning them—rested on the edges

of wooden tubs of hot water; their stockings, shoes, or sandals were laid beside them; the noble ladies knelt by the tubs on the bare brick floor, their white arms uncovered, their beauteous heads bowed down, waiting the signal to begin. When all was ready, a cardinal in full dress appeared, and, standing in the centre of the room, read a Latin prayer. While he read, the washing began, and sure such rubbing and scrubbing and eager anxiety were never seen. I passed round and saw them working with right good-will, their white hands and arms dabbling in the dirty water, and contrasting very strangely with the sunburnt skin of the poor women, who seemed, on the whole, quite shocked. Others, however, looking on it in its proper light as an act of devotion, repeated *Aves* and *coronas*. Some endeavoured to assist, and were not permitted by the pretty ladies, who would do all themselves; and some sat staring stolidly, overcome with astonishment. There was the R——, the haughtiest princess in Rome, hard at work, a little coronet of gold just visible in her coal-black hair; and the Marchesa C——, the most zealous of English converts; and the sweet bride-elect whom I had seen above so anxious to assist. No one can describe the grace and gentleness with which the latter performed her revolting duty. When

she had satisfied her conscience by a most vigorous washing, she stooped down, kissed the pilgrim's feet, drew on the coarse stockings and the clumsy, dirty shoes, and then rose. The poor contadina, evidently quite touched by her great beauty and kindness, invoked an audible blessing on her. "*E un vero angelo di beltà, una santa di Dio,*" added the woman, loud enough for the whole room to hear; whereupon all the bystanders turned and looked, making the gracious bride blush redder than roses. Oh, well be it with thee, thou fair bride, in coming years, and may the blessing invoked on thy young head by the poor pilgrim be chronicled in the courts of heaven!

I can give no account of the service on Easter Sunday, for I was too unwell to attend the high mass at St. Peter's. Truth to tell, I am glad of the excuse, for I hate to describe what everybody has seen. Instead, I will note down two anecdotes—one ancient and classical, the other modern and gossiping.

In the reign of Paul III., near the church of San Vitale, a treasure was found in the vineyard of a certain Signore Orazio Muti by his *vignarolo*, or head labourer, consisting of a great quantity of gold pieces and many valuable jewels. The *vignarolo's* honesty not being proof against such a temptation, he decamped with the treasure. Signore Orazio, going to the vine-

yard and not finding his man, looked everywhere for him. The man he could not find, for no man was there, but he found what much surprised him—an open hole, copper vessels, and shivered urns of antique workmanship. Guessing what had occurred, he caused further search to be made, and came on more gold coin; so, being fully convinced of the fraud practised on him, he gave notice to all the bankers and goldsmiths of Rome that any one coming with ancient coin to change, or jewels to sell, should be arrested. It happened at this time that Michel Angelo, then residing in Rome, sent a servant of his, called Urbino (a great favourite, and almost a companion of the great *maestro*, mentioned in his Life by Vasari, who, however, gossip as he is, does not give us this adventure), to change some money little in use at that time. The banker, seeing the coin, and recollecting the late occurrence, never for a moment doubted but that he had caught the thief, and Urbino, to his uncommon surprise, was taken prisoner. When he was examined as to the money, he replied, "That he had had it from his master, Michel Angelo." The judge, a man of uncompromising resolution, at once ordered Michel Angelo to be imprisoned. This was done, and the Colossus of Art was consigned to a gaol. When he was produced for examination, and was asked his name, he replied—

"Michel Angelo Buonarotti."

"From what country?"

"Florence."

"Do you know Signore Muti (dumb)?"

"How would you have me know the *Muti*, if I am not even known by those who can *talk?*" replied the painter, in a very ill humour.

In the meantime, certain cardinals, having heard of the affair, sent in haste to the judge to order his immediate liberation. But the judge, although forced to obey, retained poor Urbino some days longer in prison. As to Muti, he heard, after awhile, that his *vignarolo* had been seen at Venice; so he set off straight to that city, where he found that his wily servant had presented the medals and jewels to the council, who, in return, had made him a citizen, with an ample allowance; and, although Muti proved his prior right, and instituted a suit, the Signoria kept the treasure, and only paid his expenses back to Rome.

Lady Coventry (who, as Mrs. Grundy said, had enjoyed herself in her day), when she was old and frail, set up her tent in the Eternal City, where she lived like a real princess. By some chance she rented the magnificent Barberini Palace, the place where the lovely Cenci lives enshrined in the picture-gallery. How, or why, or wherefore, those haughty

magnates condescended to let their vast ancestral palace I cannot tell; but certain it is they did so, and that for many years her ladyship lived there like a fairy queen, for she was of extremely diminutive stature. She gave dinners to artists, who condescended to patronise her in consideration of the grand banquets they enjoyed in the old feudal halls; she had many gentlemen friends, but no female ones; she had a suite of attendants, servants, *maestri di casa*, pages, women, men, and boys—like an Eastern Begum; and she had also a *scopatore*—a humble sweeper of those gilded saloons, a common Italian *canaglia*, who seemed to have as much connection with his be-satined and be-jewelled little mistress as I with Hercules. Nevertheless, strange things do happen, and it is on the countess and the *scopatore* that my tale hangs.

She was given to purchasing ornaments, bronzes, cameos, antiquities, and other beautiful things for the adornment of her sumptuous apartments. Well, all at once, one thing was lost, and then another, and, what was worse, the things never turned up again. My lady threatened the *maestro di casa* that if the articles were not reproduced she would sweep her palace of all her domestics as clean as the *tramontana* sweeps off the falling leaves in autumn.

"*Sua eccellenza,*" said the man, "you are not the

only sufferer; we also have been robbed of clothes and of various things."

"Whom do you suspect?" asks the lady.

"Why, to tell the truth, signora, we all suspect Rocco."

Who was Rocco? The great little lady had never even heard the name of this her obscure attendant. Rocco was the humble sweeper of the marble floors of miladi's palace. Of course he was instantly to be dismissed. Rocco was to go, and he went: miladi, in her satin boudoir, never wasted a thought on that obscure lump of clay.

One night, not long after, Lady Coventry lay in bed —pillowed, as such dames are, in dainty lace and fine linen—between waking and sleeping, in a half-dreamy state of conscious unconsciousness, when she heard the handle of her door turn. In a moment she was sitting up in bed. A figure entered, bearing a light—bearing, too, something that gleamed in his hand.

"Who's there?" screamed my lady.

"Rocco," replied a hollow voice.

In an instant the truth flashed across her mind: Rocco, the *scopatore*, was there, come to have his *vendetta*. He had penetrated into the interior of the palace he knew so well, and was going to murder her! Now, the little lady was not wanting in spirit—she was

no coward; so, when she heard this ominous name, she first seized the bell-rope beside her, and then darted out of bed towards a door opening into a corridor opposite. As she rushed out, Rocco bounded after her, and, with murderous haste, clutched her by her night-clothes in the passage. Finding herself within his gripe, she flung herself against him like a cat, and clung to him with the agonised hold of terrified despair. A death-struggle ensued between the wiry little countess and the strong *scopatore*. The light which he held was extinguished, but, ere it fell, she saw the upraised dagger—a moment more, and she felt it ploughing the skin in the back of her neck, blow after blow, quick as they could fall. The more he stabbed (and many were the wounds he inflicted), the tighter she clung to him, for she knew he would murder her if he could. As they struggled she fell against a table, and he lost his hold; at the same moment the steward—who had heard the bell ring, but had stopped to put on his clothes—appeared with a light. Rocco rushed back by the way he had come, too quickly to be caught; and the poor little countess was picked up deluged in blood, and with two of her teeth (perhaps they were false, *chi lo sa?*) knocked out.

By earliest dawn information was given to the

police. An immense sensation was excited. A peeress to be stabbed in her own palace—in her bedroom—to be dead, or dying—the assassin to have escaped! All this was tremendous. Every engine was set to work to discover Rocco; every hole of the Eternal City—and the holes where the wretched and criminal congregate in squalid poverty are many and horrible—was ransacked. At last Rocco was unearthed and put in prison; further, he was tried and condemned to the galleys for life. The man had the presumption to send to the countess for money while she lay in her bed recovering from the wounds he had inflicted. And she actually gave him money. Yes, the naughty little countess, whom ladies were too virtuous to visit, sent the assassin money to cheer his weary hours in that loathsome prison. Blessings on her kind heart! Poor Rocco never went to the galleys. He died in prison, and with his last breath begged the pardon of his generous mistress.

She soon got the better of her wounds, which were but flesh-cuts, and lived to tell the story of "*her own murder,*" as she called it, as she sat heading her amply-furnished board. She told it well, and it was esteemed a good anecdote. Now she is dead, the little countess, and all that remains of her is a pair of tiny feet sculptured in marble, a monument of vanity, in the

corner of a certain studio under the shadow of the palace where she flourished. But there is a register in the good angels' book that shall not be forgotten in that solemn day of reckoning when the humble *scopatore* and the dainty countess shall stand together before the Great Judge. The register written in that book will cover a multitude of sins, and poor Rocco's dying blessing shall witness loudly in her favour—the poor, vain, naughty little countess with the noble, forgiving soul!

* * * * *

Delightful as is the climate of Rome, its very mildness renders it so exceedingly enervating and exhausting, that after a residence of six or seven months the debilitated constitution requires a change. But the question is where to go—a query not so easily answered. Perhaps no large city in the world was ever more in want of suburban resources—a want arising from the vast extent of the desolate Campagna, which clasps the city on all sides with an arid girdle. Here not a house is to be seen, neither man nor beast thriving on that unwholesome soil, which, with its deadly night exhalations, is so pernicious in summer as to drive the very cattle from their pastures. One must journey sixteen long miles by rail or road to Albano, or L'Aricia, or

Frascati, before anything in the shape of summer quarters appears. What weary pilgrimages I made! What horrible dens (all the property of princes) did I behold! It was positively sickening to walk through them. Each time I returned home more and more disgusted. At last we heard of quite unexceptionable apartments at Rocca di Papa, which we fixed upon at once. The Rocca, seen distinctly from Rome to the right of Frascati, is a regular eagle's nest perched on the outskirts of the Alban Hills. At a distance the place looks unattainable except by an aërial railway or a balloon; but we shall see. The air is the purest in the neighbourhood of Rome, and the sea breezes come sweeping over its woods with a delicious coolness.

We have reached our *villeggiatura*, and are—— But I must tell things in order. At four o'clock we ordered the carriage, our luggage having preceded us in a most primitive cart drawn by two great oxen. As I descended the steep stairs leading from our rooms, *al secondo*—those regular Roman stairs, filthy and abominable in spite of remonstrances—and looked into the recesses of the interior *cortile* (a place which, in London, would infallibly be pounced on by the sanitary commissioners by reason of its varied and most potent smells), I really felt quite sentimental, and could not bear the idea of turning my back on wonderful Rome

even for a temporary absence. But this weakness yielded to anticipations of the rural beauty and historic recollections in store for me on the Alban Hills; so, wafting an adieu to the stately Pincian Hill, and giving a salute to the dome of St. Peter's and the Coliseum, we drove out by the Lateran Gate. The Campagna traversed, we mount the lower spurs of the Alban Hills, towards Grotta Ferrata. A fair and pleasant scene opens before us; cultivation reappears; there are olive-grounds bearing rich promise of fruit, and great vineyards sloping down on the sunny side of the valleys towards gushing streamlets. There is an old ruined tower high on a rugged mound, above which the hills whither we are journeying rise almost perpendicularly into the blue sky, mildly mellowed by the approach of evening. Now we are at Grotta Ferrata, a small village clustering filially round an immense castellated monastery—a feudal pile that frowns down over a turfy meadow, and is approached by several noble avenues of ancient elms. Within that monastery are Domenichino's glorious frescoes; but—*pazienza!* not a word of description—we must reach the Rocca. The poor horses, hot and weary, rest for a moment before the *osteria*, a locality where fleas abound, and *salame* would be dressed swimming in oil—ideas which alarm us so much that we do

not descend. So an old man comes hobbling out with a wicker bottle in his hand, and asks if "the *eccellenze* will not drink." "No, they won't." So off he limps, wishing us a "*buon viaggio*" with as much earnest unction as if we were bound for the moon on Astolfo's hippogriff. The horses having recovered their wind, we plunge into cavernous lanes, and along roads scattered over with huge boulders that must have lain there since the days when Ascanius founded Alba. But if the roads are rough, how lovely is the matted tangle of flowers and moss clothing the high banks on either side—the clematis, the vine, and the fair convolvulus wreathing every stone and branch with exquisite garlands!

This road is interminable. It becomes worse and worse, and we seem to sink deeper and deeper between the rocky banks.

"If we should meet anything—only fancy!"

No sooner are the words spoken than, turning a sharp angle, a file of loaded carts appears, bearing down on us. Now what is to be done?

"Have the grace to stop," cries our Jehu.

The drivers respond, "*Si, si;* all is well. You shall pass." (The Italians, when not provoked, are *so* polite!)

Then, after unheard-of exertions in the way of

talking and screaming (for nothing *can* be done here without an immoderate amount of palaver), the oxen and the carts are dragged to one side, and Jehu, smacking his whip, proceeds.

When we at last emerged from those deep lanes we found ourselves in a boundless forest of splendid chestnuts—a rare old wood, shut in by lofty mountains veiled with the same leafy covering. Evening shed around soft tints, deepening the shadows and dimming the vistas through these ancient trees, whose silvery trunks caught the last rays of the departing sun. But most beautiful of all was the broom, which formed a golden underwood glorious to behold. On the rising hills, in the wooded chasms, deep in the valleys, waved the gilded shrubs, forming masses of colour that, blending with the bright green, were perfectly dazzling.

A steep ascent now lay before us, and a little opening in the overarching boughs disclosed the Rocca, high on the topmost mountain-peak—a grey mysterious pile, looking despitefully down, as if mocking our efforts to reach it. It positively looks as distant as it did from the Campagna! How the poor horses strive to pull the carriage up that endless hill! And so they must, for already the stars are appearing, and the dark wood glooms and closes around us like a dreamy vision. In

a grotto beside the road a little shrine has been raised to the Madonna. It contains a picture of her bearing the Jesus-child; a lamp burns dimly before it, and sheds its flickering gleam across the road; flowers are placed near in broken cups; and a bright carpet of yellow broom-flowers has been spread in honour of the Virgin-mother. As we proceed (slowly enough now, for it is almost dark) some one suggests *brigands*, which makes us all uncomfortable; but as no one likes to own it, a dead silence ensues. At last we stop; we are come as far as the carriage can take us, and must walk up to the house—*E così buona notte!*

Early this morning I threw open the green *persiani* and looked out. Never shall I forget the thrill of rapturous delight with which I beheld that glorious view. The very universe seemed lying at my feet; and I thought of Satan, and the exceeding high mountain from whence all the kingdoms of the world were shown to the Redeemer, and wondered if a vaster horizon opened before Him. It was magnificent! Description can do but scant justice to that majestic union of woods, green and golden, that melt lovingly into plains, which in their turn melt into a city backed by pale blue mountains. The mountains blend in the dim aërial distance with the ocean; and the ocean in its turn dissolves into the heavens. Beneath me lies

the boundless, measureless Campagna—a soft desert, waving, undulating, billowy, reflecting every change of the passing clouds, now darkened with vast masses of shade, like huge floating chimeras, now dancing, dazzling, in the burning sunshine—an earthly main, changeful and fitful as its prototype the sea. There were the yellow corn-fields, the emerald pastures, the wildernesses of barren grass, burnt up and calcined; while here and there rose a sombre tomb, a ruined tower, or a columned villa. Beyond, raised on a stately mountain-terrace, lay Rome—that great and unutterable Sphinx-word which the last judgment only shall unfold—throned on her seven legendary hills; here and there a bright light or glistening point revealing some stately portico, or dome, or obelisk—yet all vague and undefined as that Eternity to which her existence is so mysteriously linked.

To the right, where the mighty prairie fades into the cloudy distance, abruptly rises Monte Soracte—Apollo's ancient home—lone and solitary, its rugged sides and the connecting mountains darkened by the Cimmerian forest, which leads the eye on to the graceful chain of the Sabine Hills. To the left, a line of silver struggles through the plain, twisting and twining like a glittering cord — the sacred Tiber flowing on towards Ostia and the sea. Oh, the heavenly breezes

that came wafted to me, fresh and cool as the breath of morning! Well was it with me in this beauteous solitude, where all Nature—land, and sea, and air—danced and rejoiced, as if sympathising with my delight.

Nearer at hand lay Grotta Ferrata, Marino, and Castel Gondolfo domed and Oriental-looking, cresting the topmost headland of the Alban Lake. Behind me uprose the conical height of Monte Cavo, a diadem of ancient trees waving before the white convent on its summit; while lower down, on the opposite side, a broad defile, once the Latin Valley, cleft asunder the heights of ancient Tusculum, now fertile and verdant with the gardens of modern Frascati. As I gazed, images of fabulous and historic Rome floated before my eyes—Virgil, Horace, quaint old Livy, courtly Tacitus, and bitter Suetonius were here—no shadows of antiquity, but real living men. On this land they had lived, on these mountains they had sung, on those plains the heroes whose deeds they immortalised had fought and conquered. Classic history lay like a book before me—page after page to be read in these fair lines, these desolate valleys, and yon boundless expanse!

* * * * *

We are becoming settled in our new home, which English readers would think passing strange. A great gaping door opens from the street (big enough to

accommodate a carriage and six) into a huge passage or hall, a cross between a dungeon and a cellar, where the horses stand, and the boys enjoy a game of *mora—un, due, trè, sempre l'istesso.* Stone stairs, very rarely swept, mount up various stories to a kind of Babel altitude, each story being considered as a separate house, having its door and bell. On the first *piano* (story) some Italians are enjoying the *villeggiatura,* dividing their time between sleeping and eating, the latter operation being announced by a most potent smell of garlic. Their windows are always closed, and they scarcely ever go out; so they must have a lively time of it. But I forget, there *is* something going on at Rocca di Papa, which affords matter for gossip and entertainment to the languid natives. A Contessa, brown and dried as a walnut-shell, after having passed a life of *divertimento* and made much scandal in her day, has become a widow, and now receives the tender addresses of a certain young marquis of the Guardia Nobile, who is as poor as Job, and as extravagant as the Prodigal. When his purse is light, he mounts and rides to visit his ancient Phyllis, who, with rapturous welcome, gives him no end of money and love. Both favours received, the gallant knight rides back again to Rome, leaving the venerable Contessa inconsolable until the next time

his pockets want relining. "*Telle est la vie, même au fond des forêts!*"

We rusticate above in rooms unconscious of carpets, but laid down with fine scagliola floors. Sometimes we have meat for dinner; sometimes we get only brown bread and eggs; at other times, thanks to our Mercuries, the *carbonari* from Albano and Frascati, we revel in the Egyptian flesh-pots.

Besides our own *servitù* there is a mixed and heterogeneous crowd always loitering about. First and foremost comes Maria, a stalwart contadina, with the fresh ruddy look of a rustic Hebe. She carries all the water used in the house in a great brass vessel on her head, and carries it nobly, with the air and step of a water-nymph, up those long, long flights of stairs. Maria flaunts about with a red handkerchief floating from her head, her hair pierced by a silver arrow—long, and sharp, and dangerous—a weapon she can use, too, should occasion require; for a dark devil lurks in Maria's flashing eyes. Round her neck are suspended long strings of coral, giving her, as connected with the brass vessel and the water generally, a mermaid character. On Sundays and festa days Maria puts on a smart red petticoat, with green ribbons, and a gorgeous pair of purple stays, trimmed with a profusion of white lace. She has gold earrings and a cross,

which *may* be taken off; but the coral I believe she sleeps in. There are dark stories about Maria, otherwise a kind, genial soul, ever ready with her sparkling smile and hearty "*Stia bene, signora.*" She is married to a brute, a species of *cacciatore*, who divides his time between wandering in the forest and drinking in the *Spaccio di Vino*, from whence it was "his custom of an afternoon" to return home dead drunk, and to beat Maria dreadfully.

Maria, who was a comely girl, and might have married better, but for an unhappy hankering after this unworthy Nimrod, bore it meekly for some time. She bore his blows in silence, shedding sad and bitter tears over her blighted love—her true and honest love. But she was an Italian. Hot fever-blood flowed in her veins; and by-and-by desire for the *vendetta* tugged like a gloomy spirit at her heart-strings. She would have vengeance—vengeance on the man who had so basely ill-used her.

The opportunity was not long wanting. Ferdinando soon staggered into their wretched hovel, royally drunk, and flung himself upon the nuptial couch (Anglicè, the only bed they possessed). Maria, in ominous silence, was awaiting his return. She rose, and taking her needles and scissors, the weapons of our sex, sat down beside the bed on which her debased husband lay

wrapped in a bestial sleep, and began to sew. Yes, to sew—stitching the two sheets firmly and securely together! Her hand did not tremble, but there was a deadly look in her black eyes all the while, pregnant of evil. She sewed until Ferdinando was entirely enclosed as in a net; then she rose—her eyes flashing a still darker fire—and proceeded to a certain corner where he kept his guns, and sticks, and knives. Her hand fell intuitively on a big stiletto knife; but it trembled a little, and was withdrawn. She paused, then firmly clutched the largest and heaviest bludgeon there. A Satanic smile came over her face as she raised the heavy stick and dealt him a portentous blow; then another and another, until the drunken man, suddenly sobered by the pain, writhed and swayed in agony, as he lay weltering in his blood. His piteous cries aroused the neighbours, who came bursting in. They shrank back appalled at the ghastly sight; for Maria, wild with evil passions, stood like an avenging Fury over her husband, remorseless, unsexed, maddened. She was seized from behind, and the weapon forced from her grasp. Recalled to herself, she swooned away. Her husband, when extricated from the sheets, was all but dead. Months passed ere he recovered, a cowed and humbled man, who shrank away from Maria like a beaten cur. Poverty forced them still to live under

the same roof, but they never spoke. When we came there, a year had passed, and Maria looked jovial and happy. She had conquered; and but for a certain dark flashing of the eye, I could not have believed so dire a tale.

We have a farm-yard behind the villa—more like an English farm-yard than any I have seen in Italy; and I love it for the sake of my far-off fatherland. There are great stacks of firewood; and tribes of poultry; and three melancholy geese wandering about in search of water, which they never find; and horses that come down from the woods for their evening feed; and dogs that lie all day asleep in the sun. But, after all, it is not English; for down comes quiet Michele, the serving-man, to the *Ave Maria* in the pleasant evening time, followed by a troop of grey oxen with mighty horns, and strings of mules laden with wood, and horses carrying on their backs piled-up sheaves of sweet-scented hay from the upper pastures on Hannibal's Camp. Here, too, is the hillside garden terraced with vines; and the long *pergola* (arbour) draped with young grapes, under which the children play at *bocci* in the shade; and there is a sound of low chanting from the monastery, in the wood below, when the monks meet for evening prayer.

But I have not yet introduced you to half the

humours of our rock-home, the houses of which are, as it were, chained to the rock, something after the manner of Prometheus. There are Maria's children, who gather about the doors, and roll in the dust, or sleep on the bare stones—hardy little wretches, as ignorant of soap as of algebra. Luigi, the youngest, has his mother's eyes, and is a real little beauty, fat, and round, and graceful as a young Cupid, if he were only cleaned from the dirt contracted during his two years' life. He is always to be seen flourishing a large table-knife, threatening instant *felo de se* when he rolls from the top of a certain flight of stairs to the bottom —a feat he contrives to perform many times every day. His great delight is to sit in the midst of the cocks and hens and the three misanthropic geese, which come crowding round him with an unwarrantable freedom, pecking at the morsel of bread he is munching—a liberty he repels by lustily screaming and brandishing his table-knife, with a look and action worthy of an infant Hercules. He would swear, that urchin, if he could speak. Besides tumbling down the steps, he has an immense predilection for water, which evil passion led him vagabondising the other day into the street to the town fountain, where he was presently discovered with his head downwards, and his heels in the air, almost drowned. Great was the indignation of Maria,

who, administering a revivifying thump, held him by the heels in the air until all the water had escaped from his mouth, whereupon she brought him home crumpled up in her apron like a dead rabbit. But next day he was valiantly fighting with the dogs, the geese, and the cocks and hens—the same devil-may-care little imp as ever!

Luigi, it must be owned, has a pleasant enough life of it with his little sister, whom he beats *à volonté*, unless when his young aunt Filomela (a tall, well-favoured lass who counts some fifteen summers, and carries loads of bricks on her head all day to the labourers below repairing the wall) chances to catch him in a quiet corner, when she fails not to administer her practical opinion of his conduct and principles with such emphatic arguments in the shape of blows as cause poor Luigi to wake the deepest echoes of the Rocca. A wicked little soul is Filomela, and quite up to any mischief.

But an agreeable holocaust to Luigi's feelings is shortly offered by Maria, who, rushing down at the noise, beats her sister in return, sending her off—with abundant objurgations—to carry bricks on her head.

Not to be forgotten is our landlady, the Sora Nena, a huge, bulky woman of some forty years old, who amuses her leisure by drinking the good *vino sincero* all

day. This excellent lady is distinguished by a certain unsteadiness in her legs, and a misty, vague expression in her eyes, when (a gaudy handkerchief flying from her head) she descends into the yard to take the air after the sun has set. She generally grunts out a few inarticulate words, quite unintelligible to any one but the fowls and the disconsolate geese, which all flock around her in a joyous chorus, and jump on her head and shoulders—a delicate attention she rewards with some corn. She settles down finally near the hen-house door into a state of drowsy unconsciousness, and faintly calls at intervals for Rosa, her maid, who at length comes to fetch her home. Her husband, L——, the *nouveau riche*, is a study in his line. He began life as a shepherd, and either by finding a treasure on Monte Cavo, or egregiously cheating his employers, has made an immense fortune, bought lands and woods, flocks and herds, and become a *grand signore*, without the wildest notion of how to spend or to enjoy his money, except by grinding and oppressing the poor. He has skulked about in the woods for weeks, to escape being murdered by those he has injured, dozens of men having sworn to take his life; as in the republican days of Roman freedom the patrician youth vowed to cut off their country's foe, the Etruscan Porsenna.

Such is the home circle in our *villeggiatura*. Outside

is a street mounting up in an almost perpendicular line towards the topmost mass of rock, where a few ancient trees—scathed and worn by the winds of centuries—wave over the remnants of a fortress, once the property of the Orsini, but now a *feudo* of their deadliest enemies, the Colonna. Besieged and taken by the Duke of Calabria in 1484, and by the Caraffeschi and the Duke of Alba afterwards, this now desolate and remote ruin has often resounded to the thunder of artillery. The rock on which it stood was originally formed by vast deposits of lava from what was once a great volcano. The village is now perched on the outermost lip of the ancient crater; the ground, the banks, the rocks are all lava. Under the shadow of the mediæval citadel, the Duomo squeezes itself in on the top of the single street, its deep melodious clock giving time to the whole village, and reminding us, though *we* lie still and dream—pleasant dreams on distant mountain-tops—that the busy world still rushes on, eager, feverish, impetuous; that death and joy, hatred and love, and every changing passion still rule the passing hour in that world stretched beneath our feet.

VI.

Monte Cavo—Home Life—Maria—The Geese—The Dance—Marino, and Gossip about its History—A Night at a Convent.

THE great sight of our savage fortress-home is Monte Cavo, which rises, as I have said, majestically behind the Rocca. Troops of visitors come daily through the chestnut forest to visit this highest summit of the Alban Mount. I was naturally all impatience until I also had addressed myself to the ascent. The road lay through the fair forests that overmantled all around, save the grim sides of the Latin valley and the bleak heights of Tusculum. On I went by a rough track through that charmed wood, passing by clearings where those dusky squatters, the charcoal-burners, sit month after month by their smouldering fires, undermining the magnificent old trees spared by time from bygone centuries when Diana ruled the woods. On I go through parting walls of lava rock which rise like gigantic fortifications on either hand, the stone of a ruddy glowing colour, warmed as it were by internal fires, and ever palpi-

tating with a subdued heat. How grandly these ravines open—laced and embroidered with as rich undergrowth of vines, clematis, and wild roses, and diademed with sombre trees and shrubs! Grottoes yawn in the deep sides, leading down into unfathomable depths—perhaps to Tartarus and the ghastly circle where Lucifer sits enthroned amid blue fires. The merry light is subdued and oppressed in this mysterious pass, where eternal twilight reigns. After a time the defile terminates, and I emerge into light, and life, and sunshine, on an elevation above the Rocca. The ever-glorious prospect opens far and wide. Around me a valley, or rather plateau, appears, carpeted with the finest, greenest grass—a great space, perhaps four miles in circuit, bordered by low hills, bare and unwooded, suggesting bitter, piercing winds; —a strange, lonely region.

This plain, so singular in aspect, is said to have been the mouth of an ancient volcano. For that fact no one can vouch; nor does it matter. But it matters much to know that it was the camp of Hannibal, where that eccentric one-eyed hero encamped with his army during his memorable *scappata* from the South, when he hoped, by threatening the very gates of Rome, to create a diversion in favour of Capua, then besieged by the Consuls. But the stern Romans budged not from

Capua until the gates opened to receive them in triumph. Vainly did Hannibal sound his loud alarums in his camp on the Alban Hills—vainly did he, descending into the Campagna, entrench his forces on the Anio stream, three miles from imperial Rome, and skirmish with his swift-riding Numidians under the very walls. The Seven Hills heeded not—the Palladium shook not—the sacred fire burnt bright and clear, though the dreadful Carthaginian and his awful host glittered before the very eyes of the Quirites. The ground on which he stood was bought and sold in the Forum by those immovable men of brass, who knew that it was written Rome should stand as long as time endured. At the same moment a great army marched out of the opposite gates to Spain—far-off Spain—in mocking defiance, to show the Carthaginians that Rome had stout hearts and to spare, both to conquer the Pillars of Hercules, and to drive Hannibal back in shame from whence he came. Brave old Rome!

These recollections came vividly before me as I looked on the great field, formed by Nature for an encampment, with its fringe of low hills, high enough for shelter, but too bare for ambuscades. I thought on the day when Hannibal, gazing down on the Campagna and the Appian and Nomentana Ways stretching away

towards the towers of Rome, saw them, as I did then, glistening in the sun. The great outlines are the same: there, in the distance, are the Street of Tombs, the Latin valley, and rocky Tusculum; but the foreground is changed—I and my pony, instead of the Carthaginian host and the great conqueror that led them!

Before me rose Monte Cavo, a conical peak said to be three thousand feet above the neighbouring ocean—a lovely mountain, green and luxuriant as an English plaisance. The road winds up gently through the underwood and parting branches, until a purer air clothes all around with sheeny light. Here are no fierce rocks, no frowning precipices, no thundering streams or crashing avalanches—all is serenely lovely, rich, and harmonious, as befits the smiling land beloved of Venus, where the Graces and the Muses still are worshipped. A turn of the road brought me suddenly face to face with a group of Passionist monks—pale, emaciated men—resting on some stones by the wayside. They had been down into the common world, and were now returning to their sky-parlour—the aërial monastery aloft. Ascetics as they were, and weaned from all earthly things, these good monks, like true Italians, were full of courtesy. Their *abbate* hats were instantly raised as they perceived me, and a "*Buona passeggiata alla signora*" was uttered in dull, cold voices, wherein,

though no mundane passions lingered, much that was kind and charitable was expressed.

As I wound round the mountain the panorama grew wider and grander. The sea, vast as eternity, outstretched into far-off fields of light and glory, melting dreamily into the vague clouds that float down to embrace it. There was old Tiber glittering across the Campagna, and the vast forest enshrouding the descending valleys, and the two sweet lakes reposing in their loveliness within umbrageous banks—that of Albano sad and solemn, ever mourning the majestic past; Nemi like a fairy-cup set in an emerald casing, so small and delicate that Titania might have borne it in the hollow of her hand, and carried it to fairy-land. Oh, the fair smiling lawns—the bonnie braes of velvet turf—the luxuriant fields of corn, like golden rivers winding amid the woods—the tufted knolls and parting rifts that opened before me! As the fleecy clouds came and went, and "waves of shadow" passed over the mighty landscape, one might deem that some goddess was moving among the woods.

Now I have reached the old Roman kerb-stones, that begin midway up the ascent, formed of great polygonal blocks, perfect and well preserved, the marks of the chariot-wheels still visible. And this, then, is truly and veritably the *Via Triumphalis*, and these stones are

worn by the chariots of Rome's greatest generals, who went up to celebrate her triumphs at the Latin shrine! Here Julius Cæsar triumphed when named Dictator; and Marcellus, after his cruel siege of glorious Syracuse, when the beauty and the power of the fair Southern capital were crushed out for ever; and many other heroes whose deeds are chronicled on the classic page, —here they passed, coming from out the great city and its pillared Forum. Many of the stones bear the letters V. N., still plainly visible, meaning *Via Numinis*, "the Road to the Clouds." So I am fairly *en route* for heaven—even if it be a pagan one, still heaven—and I go on rejoicing; for my Pegasus (meaning my own individual Pegasus, not the quiet pony which, poor soul! cares for none of these things) gets exceedingly rampant at the very notion of mounting to the classic heavens, and meeting the whole circle of Olympus.

But mortals, though favoured with visions, are ever denied fruition. Oh, ye cruel gods! why entice me on this, your well-trodden pathway, and then suddenly break away and leave me? It was unkindly done.

Here I am actually at the summit on the broad platform, and lo! a white, ugly, staring monastery and a church—all so matter-of-fact that I feel quite un-

happy. And a dog barks, and a man comes out and looks askance, and begs for *bajocchi*—all on the place where Cæsar, glittering in burnished armour, offered sacrifices for a thousand victories!

There is not a vestige of the past, not a sign to lead the mind back to the great feasts of the Feriæ Latinæ, when the forty-seven cities forming the Latin confederation met in solemn conclave. Here every consul came, before departing on foreign service, to celebrate the Latin games. Fabius Maximus, before advancing against Hannibal; and Publius Scipio, who afterwards vanquished his hosts; Marcellus, before proceeding to Syracuse; Titus. Flaminius, before the conquest of Greece; Paulus Æmilius, before the Macedonian war; and Dentatus after his victory over Pyrrhus. Marcellus is especially remembered as triumphing first at Rome, and then receiving the lesser triumph or ovation on the Alban Mount. In this ceremony the victorious general did not ride in a triumphal chariot—in fact, the narrow road was too steep to admit of the ascent of so ponderous a machine—nor was he crowned with laurel; neither had he trumpets sounding before him; but he mounted the Via Numinis in sandals, attended by musicians playing on a multitude of flutes, wearing a crown of myrtle, his aspect rather pleasing than formidable, and entirely divested of war's alarms. For

the flute is an instrument dedicated to joyous measures in the "piping times of peace," and the myrtle is the tree of Venus, who, of all deities, is the most averse to war and violence. Indeed, the whole ceremony of the ovation has been referred to the festivals in honour of Bacchus rather than to those in honour of warlike affairs.

Not one stone remains of the glorious temple of Latian Jove, pillared on a thousand marble columns, which once crowned the Alban Mount. Cardinal York, Vandal as he was, has taken care of that, and removed everything tending to lead the mind of his Passionist monks back to pagan times. There is but one solitary bit of ancient wall, out of which grows a wide-spreading beech-tree, old enough to have presided over the mysteries of Cybele, or to have looked on when Saturnian Juno descended from her starry throne to survey the battle-field where the armies of the Laurentines and Trojans stood forth in bright array. Who knows but that, under the shadow of that majestic tree, Juno, in her golden chariot drawn by gaudy peacocks, may not have first touched the Ausonian earth, and hither summoned Juturna, the sister of Rutulian Turnus—a goddess who presided over water-pools and streams, once beloved by Jove himself? "Oh, nymph!" cries Juno, as the drooping goddess of streams approaches, "glory of rivers dearest

to my soul, thou knowest how thee in chief I have preferred, and willingly divided with thee the empire of the skies." Scarcely had she spoken when from her eyes Juturna poured forth tears, and three or four times with her hand smote her comely breast.—Such is the legend of the Alban Mount, which I remembered, standing under the old beech-tree.

Then I turned and beheld the goodly lands of Latium, a fair and pleasant prospect, where the whole *locale* of the Æneid is visible:—Cività Lavinia, once the Pelasgic Lanuvium, seated on its pleasant hill, the birthplace of Milo, and of Roscius and the three Antonines; Ostia, where the Trojan ships first touched the Ausonian strand; Antium, now Porto d'Anzio, once a Volscian city on the Tyrrhene Sea, where Coriolanus, "standing in the palace of his enemy, vowed eternal vengeance against his ungrateful country," where Nero was born, and from whose ruins in after ages the Belvidere Apollo emerged to astonish the artistic world; ancient Corioli, now Monte Giove, whence Coriolanus, heading the Volscian legions, marched against Rome; Pratica, once Lavinium, founded by Æneas in honour of his wife, the modest Lavinia, whose blushes, celebrated by Virgil, were "as if one had stained the Indian ivory with muddy purple, or as the white lilies mingled with copious roses;"

Ardea, the Argive capital of Turnus and his Rutulians, whose walls, once stormed by Tarquinius Superbus, were afterwards hallowed by sheltering the exiled but heroic Camillus, who departed hence bearing the proud title of Dictator, conferred on him by repentant Rome; Etruscan Cære, once a city of the Pelasgi, but named Cære by the Lydians of the Etruscan League, whither the Vestal virgins fled, bearing the sacred fire, when the Gauls conquered Rome; Tusculum, proudly seated on its rocky heights, sometimes the rival, but often the ally, of infant Rome, a place of fabulous antiquity, whose huge Pelasgic walls withstood the attack of Hannibal, but fell a sacrifice to the miserable feuds of the middle ages; near at hand Frascati, sprung from Tusculum's ruins; and Albano, the modern representative of Alba Longa, "the Long White City;" and domed Castello, with its castellated palace and its azure lake; and many a pleasant city among the Sabine Hills, where also Tivoli, the ancient Tibur, the home of Horace, Catullus, and Propertius, appears embosomed and belted with olive woods. Further on, Monte Soracte towers in solitary majesty—Soracte, on whose summit once stood Apollo's golden temple; and Monte Cimino, leading on towards ancient Etruria and the Ligurian lands. In the centre of the plain lies Rome, girded with the walls of Aurelius, no longer the luxurious

capital of the Cæsars, but consecrated to the service of that religion whose noblest temple here lifts its gigantic dome against the heavens. All Italy does not boast a braver view! Would that I could fitly describe and unfold the mysteries of the classical hieroglyphics spread around! But it is given to me only to come on a humble pony, not mounted on a living Pegasus, and I can but paint in dull prose what I saw, and how I saw it.

The platform on which the temple stood—where were celebrated the Latin games instituted by Tarquinius Superbus every year at the beginning of May, the consuls and other chief magistrates going forth in procession from the city—is now occupied by a garden, where apples and cabbages grow and ripen on the soil once so fertile in Roman laurels. No woman can enter, for the Passionist order eschews us as the parents of evil and of sin; and where amorous Jupiter once ruled no woman may approach. Strange metamorphosis! But there is an outside path running round the garden wall, constructed of massive blocks of stone, spoils of the ancient temple; and through the overarching branches of a sacred grove that yet fringes this path on the crest of the summit are disclosed glimpses of mountains, valleys, hills, ravines, all solitary and uninhabited, tossed about in chaotic

confusion, a green wilderness without form and void, melting into the purple masses of the Abruzzi, whose lofty peaks shut in the prospect. And then the sea peeps out again near the rock of Terracina, that beauteous portal to the land of Græcia Magna, distinctly visible in the far distance; and the small islets of Palmaria and Pandaria lie like dots on the blue ocean.

One more long look towards the great city and I am gone; for see! the sun, a ball of liquid fire, is sinking beneath banks of purple clouds, the sound of the *Ave Maria* rises from the church of the Rocca below, and the stars are coming out one by one.

* * * * *

Maria told me to look out of the window this morning, and I saw that the ground before the opposite house was strewed with rose-leaves.

"*Cosa significa?*" said I to the jolly *donna di facenda* (housekeeper) who stood beside me, bridling and looking full of mystery.

"*Significa l'amore,*" replied she. "*L'amore, il bel amore.*" And she sighed and looked sad for an instant, and I remembered her rage and jealousy, and how she sewed up the unfortunate *peccatore*, her *sposo*, in the sheets.

"*Ma,*" said I again, "*che cosa significa?*"

"*Ascolta,*" said she. "Opposite lives the baker Pietro, he that wears the red cap. Well, he has long loved the daughter of Fondi, the pretty Teresina; but her parents said she was too young, and sent her for education to a convent for a year. To-day she is seventeen, and she has returned, and Pietro has strewed the rose-leaves before her door to declare his passion. *E un certo modo nostro.* He has strewed the rose-leaves: if they are removed, 'tis a sign she refuses his suit; but if they remain, why, *certo,* she accepts him. Ah! Teresina will not sweep away the rose-leaves, *ne son sicura.* They may fade, but her love for Pietro, and Pietro's love for her, will only bloom and blossom as time goes on. Once it was so for me, and rose-leaves were strewed before my door in the grey morning light—red rose-leaves, to show the fervour of his passion. When I went out at sunrise to draw the water, I stepped on them; and when he saw I smiled, and gathered some into my bosom—for he was hid behind a *portone* watching me—he came forth and kissed me, and asked me to be his wife. But it is all changed now. *Tempo passato non ci penso più!* But still—*che bella cosa è l'amore*—I could have loved long, yes, and borne much, *Iddio lo sa;* but——" She pointed to the fresh rose-leaves, and tears sprang into her bright eyes. "There will be a serenade to-night,"

continued she, wiping away her tears with the back of her hand. "Two guitars will play sweetly before Teresina's door when the moon rises, and she will come out on the balcony to show Pietro that she is pleased and accepts his suit. Oh, *che bella cosa è l'amore e la gioventù!*"

I must introduce some more of the characters of our Rock perched up so high near the Via Numinis. We almost forget we have any relation at all with *terra firma*, and are inclined to try an excursion on the ambient air; but, although this heavenly altitude affects me with uncontrollable fits of longing to be off and away into the land of ideality, the rest living up here are of the earth earthy. The Contessa below thinks only of her knight—he of the Guardia Nobile, who dutifully comes, trotting on a donkey from Frascati, to visit the deploring fair—when he has spent all his money, *bien compris!* A little niece, some sixteen summers old, has arrived from a convent to visit her aunt. I wonder what she thinks of things in general, and how she will describe her aunt's *ménage* to the pious Sisters! Talk of Italian ladies' progress in virtue—oh, *miserere!* the sun shall stand still in the heavens, truth shall become a liar, the Ethiopian cast his sable skin, before Italians learn to practise virtue!

Then there are the geese—ah! they are far more

interesting than the marchesa and her superannuated loves. Their fate is a *real* tragedy—those unhappy birds which wandered for years up and down in search of that "something unpossessed" (viz., a mossy pond, such as is seen in a shady English lane, under thick hedgerows), but, withal, quiet and uncomplaining as they increased and multiplied. They are all dead as ducats! It fell out in this wise. The Padrona Nena —she who sacrifices each afternoon on her domestic altars to the jolly Bacchus god—in a drunken frolic descended with her three attendant Furies, or rather Fates. They seized the devoted birds quietly reposing on the grass, and cast them headlong into a pool of water used to irrigate the garden—a high walled-up place, from which there was no escape. There they left them, laughing and yelling like evil spirits at the frolic. The geese, unaccustomed to the cold of the chill, unwholesome tank, struggled to escape; plaintively they cackled, and beat their snowy wings with dumb and piteous pleadings; but in vain—their fate was sealed. No more the bright August sun would shine for them—no more would they peck the moist scented grasses under the wide chestnut-trees—no more rest under the pleasant vine-arbour in the garden where they were first freed from the encircling egg. Clotho had drawn their brief thread of life, Lachesis had

turned the wheel, and Atropos, with her fell scissors, cut the slender thread. The poor geese all died a melancholy death in the cold tank. But they died not unlamented, for their misfortunes caused such dolorous sympathy among the children, that after shedding those bitter tears that any strong and sudden grief so readily calls to the eyes of infancy—after wreathing and garlanding the poor white-feathered corpses with flowers—they buried them under a solitary rose-bush in the garden.

But away with melancholy—it befits not our cloud-home. Yesterday was a festa; the church bells rang a merry peal; little cannons exploded from the top of the rock; and squibs and crackers woke the classic echoes of Jove's ruined shrine. The contadine appeared in their snowy head-dresses, coral beads, and crimson bodices, and said their prayers to the Madonna del Tufo (of the Rock); and then a party of laughing maidens came to dance the *tarantella* in our rooms. Gleesome, jolly maidens these, their girlish forms already rounding into voluptuous womanhood. Timidly they came at first, one by one, with a rough curtsey, and a "*Buon giorno, signora,*" and sat down crimson with blushes. But when Elena, the fair-haired daughter of the *speziale*, struck the tambourine with a grace worthy of Terpsichore herself, and sent out the lusty

whirring sounds that the excitable Italians love so well, and little Giuletta, who had brought an harmonicon, accompanied her with some simple notes, then the bright-eyed girls came pressing through the door, all anxious to dance before the signora. They began—Carolina with Michelletta, sounding the merry castanets, and describing rapid circles round each other—now near, now distant —now accepted, now rejected—till at last Carolina kneels, and her partner dances round in triumph. 'Twas a pity such eloquent dancing should have been wasted on a girl!

After the dancing had fairly begun, the tambourine passed from hand to hand, and many a graceful measure was threaded. Maria danced fast and furiously for awhile, as became her passionate nature, and stamped on the floor, and flew round and round with vehement energy; then, as if a vision of the past had suddenly appeared before her, she covered her face with her hands and rushed out. "*Povera Maria,*" said her forsaken partner, "*ha molto sofferta*" ("she has suffered much"). The miller's love came too—she before whose door the roses were strewn—looking conscious and happy, a trifle reserved, perhaps. She sat in a corner and arranged her head-dress, and smoothed her hair, thinking doubtless of the miller, and of all the pleasant things he said.

After the dance they partook of wine—good *vino sincero* of Genzano, sweet and creamy, like champagne—and of *salame* and cakes; each coming to thank the signora for her *gran bontà*, and to wish her all kinds of felicity. And then the merry girls ran off; and then the tambourine was heard in the street; and then it sounded fainter and fainter as they ascended the hill, until distance bore away the sound, and all was silent.

Marino, surrounded by castellated walls and towers, picturesquely situated on a rocky height overlooking the Campagna, is a place I love to visit—a cosy, happy-looking spot, little suggestive in its aspect of the dark reputation it bears of being in its collective capacity extraordinarily addicted to the use of the stiletto. There is a mediæval look about the town that fascinates me. Here an old wall pushes forward, forcing its way through the modern buildings; there an old gateway, flanked by tottering "towers of other days," leads, perchance, up a lonely lane, where, if you value your skin, you would do well not to venture alone after the *Ave Maria*—that pathetic twilight hour the *assassini* love so well. Whenever you hear of a robbery or a murder, it is sure to have taken place about the *Ave Maria*. The *sgrassatore* offers up his hasty prayer to the Virgin, fumbles over his *corona* (for they are all wildly superstitious), and, thus fortified, plants himself, musket in

hand, under the shadow of some high bridge, or clump of trees, or dark *portone*, from whence he can take a deliberate aim at your head, unless you will freely consent to make your *meum* his *tuum* . . . . . else—— Heaven and all its saints have mercy on your soul!

Marino can boast broad handsome streets, where the soft summer breezes have free leave to palpitate. There is a pretty piazza, with an antique fountain rich in gods and nymphs, somewhat coated and obscured by moss, but still, even in their fallen condition, attractive. There is a fine mediæval palazzo, looking down with dignified scorn, on the surrounding houses. And there is a duomo with a handsome architectural façade; to say nothing of scores of pretty women wearing long white veils. No wonder the town looks mediæval, for its history is a rare old chronicle of the feudal times. Volumes might be written of all the fights, sieges, and battles fought under its tottering walls. It was originally called Castrimænium, and is mentioned by Pliny—whether favourably or not, in regard to its acknowledged fighting and cut-throat character, I have no means of ascertaining. Then it afterwards became a stronghold of the Orsini family—those powerful barons whose ceaseless hereditary feuds with the rival house of the Colonna so often crimsoned the streets of Rome with blood. Marino was to the

Orsini a mountain stronghold and an impregnable fortress, from whence they could defy the thunders of the Vatican (then weakened by distance, for the terrified popes had fled into France), or the attacks of their hated rivals. In those days the walls were manned with stout German mercenaries belonging to the great companies of free-lances, more odious to the Italians than the devil himself,—days so black, and dreary, and heavy with crime, one wonders how the miserable old world contrived to outlive them.

When a ray of light penetrated this opaque gloom, it was in the person of Rienzi, that eccentric but generous-hearted patriot, who so loved the great city which gave him birth that he endeavoured to revivify her wasted energies, and plant about her dying trunk the fresh soil of freedom. In this noble attempt to revive "the good estate" Rienzi was bitterly opposed by the bloodthirsty Roman barons, who, like foul and savage beasts, battened on the general slaughter. The Orsini, most savage and remorseless of all, were his bitterest enemies. Giordano Orsini, expelled from Rome as a traitor to all law and order, retired to the fortress of Marino, where he was besieged by Rienzi, but the Bear of the Orsini prevailed, and Rienzi was driven back.

In the following century, amid the chances and

changes of war, Marino passed into the possession of the Colonna, who at last, after having sacrificed thousands of lives, and spread misery and annihilation around, conquered their ancient foes. "Revenge and the Colonna!" was now the cry. "The Bear" was forgotten, or only remembered on some old frieze, or capital, or painted sign, which the rival house had not cared to obliterate. When Martin V. ascended the Papal throne, he came to reside at the stronghold of Marino, then an impregnable fortress, where, surrounded by his powerful family, and defended by their retainers, he could live in armed peace.

Many times subsequently the possession of this stronghold was disputed. Once it was besieged by Ricci, Archbishop of Pisa, one of those warlike prelates who loved plated armour better than sacerdotal robe, embroidered cope, or cup and chalice. Again the stout fortress was attacked by Sixtus IV. But the Colonna, determined not to lose so valuable a retreat, fortified it anew with massive walls and strong towers whose ruins still remain, though overgrown by umbrageous trees and waving shrubs, which hence frown down over the lovely valley below—a valley so narrow, so deep, so mysterious, so belted and darkened by woods, that before descending a very precipitous hill, and actually treading its cool recesses, one would never

dream that it existed at all. Oh! the romantic, solitary dell, surrounded by hills broken into rocky ravines and dark fissures, all of the same ruddy sunburnt tint as the bare rocks on which the town is built. Great over-arching trees of living oak, a bubbling stream that sparkles through the bottom of the valley, and thick underwood mantling the hillsides unite to make it a place to dream of—cool, murmuring, delicious, while the surrounding lands are baked by the fervid sun. There is a gate beside a fountain that bursts splashing out of a wall, leading up through an overarched walk of willows to the deepest part of the glen. This is the Parco di Colonna, a labyrinth of loveliness, leading on under red rocks through wooded braes, and by lawns sown with pink and white cyclamens. After following this beauteous ravine for some time, a bluff face of tufa rock, overmantled with arbutus and acanthus plants, shuts in the path, out of whose sides the presiding deity of the cool valley, a sparkling stream, gushes forth, and falls into two shallow circular reservoirs or basins. I am particular in describing the aspect of this spot, for the valley—which I would have you admire as much as I do—has a history—an ancient, time-worn history—chronicled by old Livy himself. The same rocks that shelter us, perhaps the ancient oaks and sombre ilex-trees under which I stand, and this brawl-

ing stream, rushing from the silent woods to career in light and sunshine beyond, saw the Latin tribes assemble on the day that proud Alba could no longer shelter the confederate nations within her stately palaces. The forty-seven tribes that formed the strength of infant Rome held their triumphant festivities on the Alban Mount, whose summit tops the distant prospect, and met for deliberation in this valley—beside this stream called the Acqua Ferentina—where, under the leafy canopy, they sat in solemn conclave.

On a certain day, when kings ruled the seven hills of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius issued orders that the Latin chiefs should assemble at the grove of Ferentina, to confer on some matters of common concern. They came accordingly in great numbers at the dawn of day, but Tarquinius delayed making his appearance until sunset. Meanwhile, the news of the day, and various topics of general interest, were discussed by the assembled chiefs as they sat by the banks of the stream awaiting the arrival of Tarquinius, who, in thus disregarding his appointment, taught all men that he was with reason called "the Proud." Turnus Herdonius, the chief of Aricia, was loud in his complaints against Tarquinius, and eloquently resented the affront put on them all by his absence. "It was no wonder," said he, "that the surname of 'Proud' had been given

him at Rome. Could any greater instance of pride be given than by thus trifling with all the nations of the Latins, after their chiefs had come so great a distance in obedience to his summons? He surely must be making trial of their patience, intending, if they submitted, utterly to crush them, for it was plain by such conduct he aimed at universal sovereignty."

This and much more was spoken by Turnus of Aricia. While he was haranguing the people, Tarquin himself appeared, and every one then turned from Turnus to salute Tarquinius, who was surrounded by his lictors and attendants—a pompous train befitting so powerful a king. Standing forth in the grove, he apologised to the chiefs for his remissness, saying "that he was obliged to remain in Rome, having been chosen umpire between a father and son;" which when Turnus understood, he was heard to mutter, "That there was no controversy between a father and son that ought not to be terminated in a few words, for that a rebellious son should suffer the consequences of his rebellion." Indeed, Turnus continued so indignant at the slight put upon the chiefs, that he retired from the assembly, leaving the rest in consultation with Tarquinius.

Now this latter was highly incensed at seeing Turnus retire into the woods, where temporary lodg-

ings had been prepared for the chiefs; so, being a bad and wicked man, and fresh from the murder of his father-in-law, he determined to have his life. In order to effect this purpose, he bribed some Aricians to convey a quantity of swords privately into Turnus's lodgings during the course of the night; then, a little before sunrise, he caused the other chiefs to be summoned in great haste, as if he had been alarmed by some extraordinary event, exclaiming, as they entered, "That his accidental delay of yesterday was surely owing to the favour of the gods, since it had been the means of preserving him and them from destruction, for that he had been assured that Turnus of Aricia had formed a conspiracy to murder them all, that he alone might rule over Latium. He was told, indeed," he artfully continued, "that a vast number of swords had been privately conveyed to his lodging; therefore he requested all the chiefs to accompany him at once, and see if the report were true." There was a great commotion among the chiefs as they listened to what Tarquin said, and they ultimately followed him to that part of the wood where Turnus lay asleep, surrounded by his guards. His servants, observing the menacing aspect of the chiefs, prepared, out of affection to their master, to oppose their approach; but, being few in number, they were soon secured, and

the swords which Tarquinius had caused to be concealed were drawn forth from every part of the lodging. Then Turnus was loaded with chains, and an assembly of the chiefs being called, and the swords brought down and laid in the midst, their fury became so ungovernable that they would not even allow him to speak in his own defence, but at once commanded that he should be thrown into the reservoir of the Acqua Ferentina—*Caput Aquæ Ferentinæ*—where a hurdle was placed over him, and upon the hurdle a heap of stones; and so he was drowned.

Extraordinary to say, after the lapse of so many centuries, Ferentina still remains precisely in its original state, being the bluff face of rock I have so particularly described, from whence the stream flows into a circular reservoir, much too shallow, indeed, to drown a man, unless he were pressed down by absolute force.

S. W—— came up the other day to pay us a visit from imperial Rome. (I feel such respect and love for the dear old city, I can never mention it without qualifying it with a majestic adjective.) Well, S. W—— came up, and underwent quite a chapter of accidents. The horse sent to meet him, being occasionally troubled by an affection of the fore-leg, was attacked with this chronic complaint on the road, and, without the

slightest intimation of his intention (which, considering the circumstances, would only have been polite), dropped poor S. W—— on a heap of stones. S. W——, bruised, astonished, and indignant, refused to mount the treacherous quadruped any more, and addressed himself to the journey on foot. But as the mountain road through the *macchia* is as difficult as the road to paradise, when he arrived, what with the fatigue, and the heat, and the bruises, he was inconsolable.

The next morning it rained an Italian deluge, notwithstanding which S. W—— would ride (on another horse) through the forest, now damp as a sponge after the recent moisture. We told him he would have a return of the Roman fever; but our counsel was in vain. Off he went, and on again came the rain—a respectable waterspout. Hours flew by; the rain continued; but no S. W—— appeared—so we supposed some of the elderly English maidens abounding at L'Ariccia had taken compassion on him and housed him. Not a bit of it. Up comes a little pencil-note, saying he had taken refuge at Palazzuola, a romantic convent on the shores of the Alban Lake, and was so happy with the Franciscan monks, he didn't intend to return till the next morning. When he came back he told us all about it.

The rain driving him in, and an ominous fit of shivering supervening, the good monks were full of compassion. He was installed in the great *sala*, looking out over the mysterious lake from a window with a balcony "*alla Giuglietta.*" This room, grand and spacious as a feudal hall, was lined with pictures of founders, benefactors, popes, and saints—all good and holy men, whose images seemed to sanctify the solemn *sala*. Here, on a late occasion, the dear benign Pope was received when he visited Palazzuola, and here all the worthy Franciscans kissed his hand.

Then they took S. W—— through long corridors lined with cells and dormitories on either hand (each bed with its little crucifix lying demurely on the sheet), down into a beautiful garden, "quite," as he said, "unreal and enchanted-looking, like fairy-land." The cypress, the Virgin's tree that points towards heaven, grew there in thick, tangled masses; and ilex-trees, and fresh oaks, and sycamores. Long broad walks stretched across the formal grass-plots, by ruined fountains where pale lilies grew, to shady groves beyond. On one side the garden was enclosed by mediæval walls (the place is more like a fortress than a monastery even now), castellated and turreted, and carved in quaint devices, with heavy stanchions and

buttresses overhanging the trackless woods that are mirrored on the bosom of the sleeping lake. "Such walls," said S. W——, "reminded one of Castle Dangerous, and of giants, and dragons, and magicians, and all the phantasmagoria of the dear old stories one has trembled over in one's childhood."

Well, on the opposite side of that antique garden, along whose front ran a lordly terrace, uprose the solemn rocks on which the building stood, moss-grown and grey with the hoary dew of centuries—a heavy load since the world was young. There they lay, rifted and ravined, and broken into fantastic glens and crevices—here a yawning cavern, going no one could guess where; there a hole, as deep as Malabolge; further on, a deep, deep rift, bottomless as the everlasting pit. Such was the garden as S. W—— described it, with the sedate friars creeping noiselessly about, their black robes and monkish cowls, sandalled feet and hempen girdles, harmonising, like a chord of sweet music, with the impressive aspect of that fair, sad scene.

There was no end to the *gentilezze* of these worthy Franciscans, who, after walking him all round and about through the vine *pergole* and up among the leafy arbours in the rock, showed him over the establishment, the stables, the bakehouse, where a lay-

brother was up to the elbows kneading flour; the kitchen, where another cowled monk was labouring among the frizzling spits, and pots, and pans; even to the savage dog that kept the gate. Then he saw the church and the organ, where they daily sang their psalms of love and praise; and, in fact, everything—ecclesiastic, mundane, domestic, romantic, feudal—in this forest-home and convent-fortress.

When supper was ready, the monks, twelve in number, assembled in the refectory, where stood six little tables, each table being laid for two persons; in the centre were bread and a bottle of *padronale* wine. The superior took his station at the top of the room —an eagle-eyed, sharp-featured man in spectacles, who had an inveterate habit of putting away everything into the overhanging folds of his right sleeve. At his little table was seated a friar from Assisi on a visit—a personage of importance; for, although the Franciscans are a begging order and ought to possess nothing, all the monks at Assisi are gentlemen and *possidenti*, and, as such, are much regarded by their poorer brethren. When the superior had pronounced a *benedicite* and blessed the tables, and the monks had crossed and blessed themselves, the *cena* was brought in by the lay-brethren — humble, servile fellows of the "Friar Tuck" pattern, red-cheeked,

jolly, cunning-looking, and withal orthodoxly smelly and dirty. These lay-brethren, never having been ordained priests like the other monks, form the ecclesiastic *profanum vulgus*. A priest is a gentleman, though penniless, because he *is* a priest, and can celebrate mass and offer the blessed sacrifice; but these—they are the *oi polli*. Well—speaking after S. W——, for no woman, under pain of the most horrible excommunications, can enter these doors—the *cena*, consisting of *minestra* (broth), *frittura*, or omelette, salad, roasted quails, fat and luscious, shot by Fra Felice in the wood, and fish netted by Fra Giacomo in the classic lake, was admirably washed down by wine—and *such* wine! Ye heathen gods! had ye then left behind a sample of Bacchus's sparkling cup when ye fled from these your native wilds? S. W—— got quite enthusiastic about the wine, I assure you; and said the monks, though moderate, seemed to enjoy and value its fine flavour. One *frate*, entering after the *benedicite*, kneeled on the floor before the superior, with his hands clasped; the superior, hotly engaged in an argument with the *possidente* from Assisi, did not perceive him; so there he knelt motionless, looking like a penitent ghost come to be shriven, until at length the superior saw him, and made the sign of the cross over him, when the *frate* took his allotted place.

After supper all the community assembled in the noble *sala*, the setting sun lighting up the old walls in a glowing haze. Beyond, over the sea and the Campagna, bands of gold and purple clouds shone for awhile; then the blue hills melted into grey, and the gloomy mountains darkened into black. The window was closed, the *lucerna* appeared, cards were brought out, and the monks played *una partita* with the well-thumbed packs which had afforded amusement to many a generation of tonsured friars. At length, when night was come, they made up a bed for S. W—— in the great *sala*, where he slept soundly, under the custody of those stern old images looking down from the walls—the guardian angels of the place.

VII.

A Hot Day in Rome—Sunsets—The Tramontana—Classical Recollections of Albano and Castello—The Festa of the Madonna del Tufo—Characters.

PEOPLE have an idea that the Italians are becoming more civilised and eschewing the use of the stiletto; that a Bravo is a chimerical animal only existing in Cooper's romance; that wives are virtuous, husbands faithful, and cicisbeism quite out of date and altogether ungenteel. All these charitable surmises are mistakes—I could recount various anecdotes proving the truth of what I say—but as to the murdering part, listen. There was a day last week in Rome of intense heat. I suppose this state of the atmosphere occasioned a moral delirium, for many who rose that morning blithe and gay, lay down before night on mother earth never to rise again. There was a madness abroad that day for certain.

S. W—— and a friend were refreshing the outward and inner man by a siesta at Nazzari's and an ice, when their attention was attracted by much running to and

fro, loud talking, swearing, and tumult—a general excitement, in fact, all tending towards the Via Babuino. They joined the crowd, and heard that an *assassino* had been committed in broad daylight, and that the corpse lay there. Pressing forward, they saw extended on the stones, quite dead, a lovely girl weltering in her blood, with a deadly wound in her side. They at once recognised her as a well-known model, renowned for her beauty and grace. There she lay, pale and bloody, on the cold stones, until some of the brothers of the Misericordia came (they that wear the black masks and long dark robes, and look more like mummies than men) and composed her limbs, and, laying her in a great sheet, carried her away. She had been walking with *un certo amico*, it seems, in the Via Babuino, when her husband passed. His ire was kindled, his jealousy aroused; he drew his stiletto and slaughtered her there on the spot where she stood; then ran away. But the *certo amico*, her *cavaliere*, ran after him when the poor thing dropped from his arm stone dead, and watched and dodged him into a certain house; and when in the evening he came out, the said *amico*, having his stiletto ready hid in the sleeve of his coat, struck him down then and there, and left him lying weltering in his blood as she had lain. Whether this valiant lover escaped or not I cannot say.

That same day a man was passing in a cart through the Piazza Barberini, where Bernini's classic fountain plays in the sun. Some one crossed his path, and, being nearly run over by the *carettino*, gave the horse a blow with a stick. No word was spoken; but the *carettiere* stopped his cart, descended, deliberately drew his stiletto, and stabbed the man dead; then, remounting, drove away. So much for the effects of a hot day in Rome.

We have had a series of the most magnificent sunsets imaginable. Sometimes great bands of purple and gold clasp the broad horizon in gorgeous girdles, the gold melting into the ocean in fields of glistening fire, or flaming here and there upon a distant mountain-peak, all Nature lying dark and black as a pall—a fitting foreground for this brilliant sight. Sometimes the whole heavens seem on fire—a terrible conflagration prefiguring that awful End when the earth and all that it contains shall be consumed with fervent heat. I have almost trembled as, standing under the *pergola* in our garden, I have watched the awful scene, too horribly beautiful to contemplate with aught but dread. Golden clouds, dissolving into crimson, saffron, and scarlet, lay quivering and palpitating as in an atmosphere of ardent fire, save where here and there sombre masses of purple, tipped with the

prevailing fire-tint, bore storms and thunders in their deep bosoms. Anon the parting clouds opened into cavernous recesses of inmost glory, and the sun, an orb of liquid fire, glowed out "stern as the unlashed eye of God." For awhile it glowed in infinite light, irradiating the sad Campagna with a wild, unearthly hue; then, dipping into the encircling sea, it slowly vanished, and deep shadows fell fast around, and the sullen, purple, massed-up clouds turned into banks of sombre lead colour. I have seen the sky at other times completely covered with a network of purple and gold, exquisitely lovely, with here and there touches and tinges as of fire, while between the parting rifts pale blue sky peeped softly out; and I have seen the vaulted firmament of a sweet heavenly blue, as it may have looked when God beheld his labour and pronounced it good.

Then, after the sunsets, came a mighty wind, the Tramontana, down from the icy North, passing across the snowy summits of the everlasting Alps, and bearing in its breath the rigid cold from out their glacier bosoms — a furious wind that tore and rent the gigantic trees, wrenched the mantling leaves in showers from the bending boughs, and thundered among the rocky caverns of our hills like a torrent of invisible avalanches.

How that Tramontana wind roared and whistled about our mountain home! How it raged up at Monte Cavo! Heaven help the poor monks! They must have trembled in their beds, and said many an *Ave* in their fear. How it yelled among the tottering ruins of Tusculum, and bent and twisted the grand old pine-trees that diadem its sloping woods around Cicero's ruined portico! The motionless waters of the Alban Lake swayed to and fro this wild and dreary night—those mystic waters that never listen to the enticing breath of fragrant summer. Even Nemi, too, Diana's mirror, must have lashed its wooded sides under the influence of such a hurricane.

I thought of all this sitting beside the blazing wood fire on our own cheerful hearth, while the storm raged remorselessly without. It is delightful to sit and listen to the shrill whistling of the gale; to watch the shadows on the wall as the fire flickers. There is an exquisite sense of luxury and domestic peace and household security at such a time. There I sat; and I questioned the wind as it swept up from the far North, of many things. I asked it of a certain corner in a once-loved home, deeply embosomed in an English wood—a pleasant home, where, in the happy days of my childhood, the sun smiled in winter as in summer. That corner — how well I remembered it! — where the

winds always gathered; where I used to listen to their wild sighs, and wonder and speculate on many things, and question the whistling spirits as I do now. That old familiar corner, I greeted it from afar, from the land to which I am banished. Did the autumn and winter winds sound there as of old, when I was young and the world young with me? There, in that corner, I once questioned the wind of my future life, and the treacherous wind answered in low breathing murmurs, and promised happiness. Oh, false wind, why didst thou so deceive me? Then I asked it of a certain room which it used to love of yore, in the spring-time, when its breath came perfumed with the year's young flowers; and the answering wind, always loud and shrill, told me that strangers dwelt there now, and that since the days of my joyous girlhood none had cared to hearken to its constant sighs in that familiar room. "Ah, wind!" cried I, "but you were false, for there you prophesied such pleasant things."

I have endeavoured to describe the classic valley of Marino. An ascending road through a magnificent wood leads from the Acqua Ferentina towards Castello and Albano. On emerging from the wood the Alban Lake bursts on the sight, its sullen waters unruffled by a wave. In front, Monte Cavo rises majestically towards those clouds to which its Via Numinis pro-

fesses to lead. To the right Castel Gondolfo stands on a grand natural platform overlooking the lake, quite embosomed in dark poetic woods. I have already said that the shores of this lake are strewn with ruins, the foundations of former nymphæums and grottoes, while pillars, marbles, and mosaics are perpetually found among the surrounding woods.

The grandest of the imperial villas was that erected by Domitian on the spot now occupied by the Villa Rospigliosi, near Castel Gondolfo. To-day I rode all over this district, and, finding the gates of the villa invitingly open, I entered the gardens, which occupy the fall of the hill between Castel Gondolfo and Albano. Long avenues of ilex-trees terminate in lovely vistas over the Campagna, melting away in blue distance towards the sea, and are here and there diversified by groups of antique statues, vases, and pillars wreathed with vine and clematis. The Rospigliosi gardens boast a terrace-walk more than a mile in length, entirely formed by overarching ilex-trees—a majestic avenue, fit only to be trodden by the great ones of the earth. Midway along this ilex avenue are the ruins of Domitian's palace—indistinct masses of wall, without form and void, and wholly overgrown by ivy and other plants.

Standing before those misshapen ruins, it seemed

scarcely possible to call forth a vision of the palace erected by that deified monster whose reign disgraced the annals of the Flavian line; yet on this spot, and descending towards the lake, stood one of the loftiest piles that even antiquity can boast. Here were magnificent atriums; great vestibules; halls of almost fabulous extent, supported by columns of the rarest coloured marbles, and adorned by statues of Grecian workmanship; ceilings and walls painted in brilliant fresco that harmonised in colour with the patterns on the mosaic floors, and were supported by cornices of silver or of gold; temples glittering with gilded plates; marble colonnades stretching through the surrounding groves; fountains of perfumed waters springing from parterres of brilliant flowers; Odeons for music and song; vast baths, where, under gilded roofs upheld by crystal columns, the cool water flowed into alabaster reservoirs; magnificent porticoes, leading by flights of steps down to the lake, where, beside the deep waters, grottoes and caves, decorated as tricliniums and nymphæums, were dedicated to the water-nymphs, the presiding deities of these enchanting shores.

But the circus and the amphitheatre attached to the palace were most frequented by Domitian himself. Here he was constantly present, wearing a

golden crown and robes of purple, and surrounded by the priests of Jupiter and the Flavian College. Not only men but women exhibited themselves in the gladiatorial games, and ran races at night under the glare of the torches with which the amphitheatre was illuminated. Even torrents of rain did not deter Domitian from remaining until the conclusion; he himself frequently changed his clothes, but a positive law forbade the audience to leave their seats. The Lake of Albano afforded an admirable *locale* for the naval battles in which he also delighted. Suetonius tells us that he regularly celebrated the festival of Minerva here, for which purpose he established a college of priests on the Alban Mount.

Born with a mean and cowardly nature, Domitian, conscious of the hatred he excited, trembled at his own shadow, unless surrounded by his guards. We are told that he daily shut himself up alone in the interior of his palace, for the purpose of killing flies with a gold bodkin! Sometimes, when visiting his Alban villa, these hours of solitude were passed in wandering through the columned arcades, where, on the walls, constructed of a peculiar marble capable of bearing the highest polish, he could perceive as he walked the shadow of any one approaching from behind. Haunted throughout his life by a constant

terror of assassination, his cowardly fears drove him to acts of horrid cruelty. One courtier was murdered because he was born under a star promising imperial power; another, because he carried about with him a map of the world; another, because he had invented a lance of a new shape. Cunning and dissembling as he was cruel and remorseless, Domitian began by caressing those whom he intended to destroy; but his honeyed phrases soon became sentences of death, and those who sat beside him at the same couch, and eat of the same dish, were often, after a courteous reception, ordered out to instant execution. Naturally of a robust constitution, his monstrous excesses so wasted his strength that his hair fell from his head, his legs shrunk, his body swelled, and he became so incapable of all fatigue that he was generally carried about in a litter. The only manly exercise in which he delighted was archery. It is related that when passing the summer months in these delightful solitudes, the quantity of wild beasts he shot was quite incredible. So skilful was he in the use of the bow, that, taking a little slave for his mark, he would shoot arrows through every finger of his upraised hand without so much as grazing the skin.

Such was the emperor who inhabited the walls under which I have been standing. Surrounded by all the

splendour, riches, luxuries, and amusements that the empire of the world could bestow, he lived a trembling, suspicious wretch, incapable of enjoying the present, and tormented by dreary presentiments of the future. A haunting gloom seems yet to linger around the dark trees whose branches wave over the scattered ruins; a curse, heavy and palpable, hangs about the shadows of this mysterious pile. As I looked, the spirit of the Past uprose so grim and horrible, so soiled with unutterable deeds of darkness, that I turned with horror from the fatal spot.

Leaving the Rospigliosi gardens, I emerged close by the tomb of Pompey, on the *regina viarum*, the Appian Way, whose every stone seems alive with the history of the past. After the imperial Cæsars—those magnificent masters of the material world—perhaps no single names stand out in such strong relief as those of St. Paul and Horace, who each have left recorded in their writings the day and the hour (so to say) when they passed over its massive pavement eighteen centuries ago. The beautiful legend connecting St. Paul with the Appian Way I have already noticed.

In the year 713, Mecænas, Cocceius, and Capitonius were sent by the senate to Brundusium, in order to effect a reconciliation between Augustus and Antony,

who was then besieging that city. Horace accompanied his friends, and in celebrating this expedition has left a most interesting description of the journey, showing how, for the first two stages, they pursued the Appian Way. (See Satire V., Book I.)

I have already mentioned Albano, *à propos* of the delightful though hurried excursion I made there. I had now more time to view it at leisure. The modern town, a long straggling street, occupies a portion of what was the imperial villa. It is, to my mind, a hot stuffy place, abounding with donkeys and vulgarity, as well as all the other adjuncts of a suburban watering-place. One sees the same *blasé* faces, the same impertinent *flâneurs* that haunted one on the Corso at Rome. Coming from the religious silence of our mountain retreat, it appeared to me an insufferable scene of confusion, dust, and tawdriness.

I put up my horse at the *locanda*, and strolled into the grounds of the Villa Doria. An English garden, gay with flowers, slopes down towards the south, while the surrounding grounds are belted with woods, where one enjoys the sea breezes wafted over the adjacent olive gardens. A pile of ruins and subterraneous excavations in the thickest portion of the grove mark the supposed site of Pompey's favourite country palace, whither the devoted Cornelia bore his ashes, after

he was murdered by the treacherous Ptolemy. His ruined sepulchre outside the gates of Albano I have already described.

Pompey, in the few peaceful intervals of his chequered life, appears to have preferred the amusements of the country to the cares and anxieties of the ever unquiet Forum. Plutarch, indeed, reproaches him for leaving his friends and soldiers to rove about Italy from one villa to another with his first wife, Julia, the daughter of Cæsar, to whom he was passionately attached. Although he was considerably her senior, and not at all attractive in person, she returned his love with the utmost affection; "but," says the shrewd old biographer, "it was the charm of his *fidelity*, together with his conversation, which, notwithstanding his natural gravity, was particularly agreeable." When Julia died, Pompey came to this villa, where they had so often resided together, to solemnise the ceremony of her interment; but the people, out of regard to him, seized on her corpse, and insisted on burying it in the Campus Martius. At Julia's death the alliance between himself and Cæsar ended, and that fatal war, destined so soon to end his brilliant career, broke out.

It is related in his life that Cicero, having offended Cæsar by the execution of Lentulus and Cethegus, two

leaders of the Catiline conspiracy, was informed he would either be obliged to defend himself by the sword or to go into exile. In this dilemma he resolved to apply to Pompey (hitherto his friend) to act as mediator. But Pompey, then the husband of Cæsar's daughter, purposely absented himself at his Alban villa; and when informed by Piso, Cicero's son-in-law, that the great orator waited without to speak to him, he, not being able to bear the sight of his former friend in such miserable circumstances (his friend who had fought such wordy battles for him, and rendered him so many important services in the course of his administration), actually escaped out of the house by a back-door. All these little particulars, which bring the great heroes of other centuries before one in their familiar every-day life, presenting them "in their very habits as they lived," are very interesting when recalled on the identical spots where the events happened. As I looked at the scattered ruins which once formed the villa, the whole scene rose vividly before me, and the idea of great Pompey escaping by a back-door particularly diverted me.

Now I must tell you more of the vagaries of our Rocca life. We have had a grand festa—yes, indeed, a festa which has turned us all *sotto sopra*—in honour of the *Madonna del Tufo*. The origin of this festa is worth relating. At the top of the town a beautiful

terrace-walk overshadowed by venerable trees skirts the face of the richly-wooded heights—a walk poised, as it were, in mid-air, 'twixt earth and heaven. At the end of this walk—the Corso of the Rocca—is a small church under an overhanging cliff. A stranger would stare at seeing that the altar is constructed of a great shapeless mass of tufa-rock (which the people reverently kiss), and that little frescoes on the walls record the fall of this rock. Now the story goes that three travellers once passed along this road in winter. The thunder rolled through the woods; the lightning glared fiercely athwart the Campagna; all Nature was convulsed. Suddenly a portion of the rocky bank, wrenched violently from its foundation, came thundering down the cliff towards the narrow terrace-road. The travellers heard the crash, and gave up all hope of life. Below was a precipice, above a mountain; no escape seemed possible. They called wildly on the Madonna—they lifted their hands in prayer—when, wonderful to relate, at the very moment that the rocky mass was suspended over their heads, the Madonna, bearing her Jesus-child, appeared. Ay, appeared on the very rock which in an instant more would engulf them; and lo! the huge mass was miraculously turned aside, and crashed down the fearful chasm below, leaving the travellers unhurt. In gratitude they vowed

a shrine here to the Virgin Mother, where she is invoked by the name of "Our Lady of the Rock." The rock, raised by incredible labour, now forms the altar, and is looked on, as Maria says, "*come una cosa di grandissima devozione.*" It is a pretty, simple church, nestling under the crags on a little platform overlooking the Lake of Albano, whose waters sleep calmly below.

The inhabitants all vie with each other at the Rocca who shall most honour the Virgin—their *own* Madonna, as they fondly call her. It is a festa known far and wide; crowds come from Rome and the environs to kneel at the shrine, and spend a joyous day in the breezy woods. When the morning came, you would have thought our little place was gone clean mad. Cannons were fired from the ruined fortress; scores of carriages laden with gentry and holiday folks lined the roads; horsemen and donkeymen came up by hundreds; the street was all astir—such a hum of voices, such ringing laughter, such smiles and sparkling eyes on every side! Men and maidens donned their best; crimson and yellow draperies floated from the houses; the bells rang cheerily out; the band from Frascati played martial airs; garlands of evergreens festooned the walls; and torches stood ready in the streets, wreathed with flowers, to be lighted in the

evening. Then came the procession winding down from the Duomo, and very pretty it looked against the dark walls of the quaint old houses. There were priests walking two and two, habited in white and red, and followed by small acolytes swinging censers; then came a great banner on poles painted in radiant colours; then more priests, and a huge cross made of rough wood, painfully recalling "the accursed tree;" then another great banner, which, as there was a fresh wind blowing, was very nearly ascending bodily into the ambient air, the poor standard-bearers making the drollest grimaces as they frantically called on their fellows to assist them. Then came more crosses and some big lanterns. The low chanting of the choir rose in solemn cadence, one group taking up the anthem, then another—a grave and melancholy music exceedingly impressive. Then clouds of incense rose in steam of rich perfume, "the sad and warning strains" falling more earnestly upon the ear; then the priests prayed with greater unction; then at last, descending the hill, appeared a famous miraculous picture in a heavy, lumbering frame, raised on a kind of stand, and borne on the shoulders of a dozen men. Like most miraculous paintings, it was as dark and black as night to eyes profane. In front walked the high-priest (*archidiacro*), a grand-looking personage in flowing

robes, diligently reciting prayers. And then came a perfect sea of contadine, pressing, crowding about the venerated image with eager enthusiasm; their snowy head-gear, scarlet bodices, golden crosses, ear-rings, and floating draperies of lace and ribbon lending life and animation to the scene. All fell prostrate on their knees as the picture passed—the pretty ladies in the balcony opposite, the ragged urchins in the streets, the handsome baker, and our fat *nouveau riche* landlord, who, with all his vices, professes to be a devoted knight of the Madonna. It was very impressive to watch that simple yet earnest crowd, so hushed and silent; and to listen to the echoing chants, like soft voices of guardian angels, ever and anon bursting forth in a pæan of love and praise; while in front stretched the wide Campagna, trackless, boundless, like a golden sea, melting into mystic fields of loveliest blue and richest purple. After the miraculous picture came files of monks, white-robed Trinitarians, the red and blue cross embroidered on their breasts; and brown-habited Franciscans (*Osservanti*), with shaven crowns and hempen girdles; and two old priests leading pretty children dressed as angels, graceful, smooth-faced things, their long, tangling hair garlanded with flowers hanging down over blue and white draperies, their small sandalled feet daintily pressing the rude stones.

Such *concetti* as these might not be expedient elsewhere, but here in the sunny South, the land of ideality and symbolism, they are both appropriate and suggestive.

After the procession had passed we sallied out to see the humours of this religious fair. Along the terrace-walk the fun waxed fast and furious. Such thousands of people, such dust, such a braying of donkeys, and such a sun!—it was altogether overwhelming. Hundreds of stalwart young Roman peasants were there, their jackets thrown jauntily over one shoulder; and hosts of lovely girls in every variety of picturesque costume, rural Venuses these, village Circes, with wicked eyes and bright olive complexions, determined to slay no end of hearts. 'Twas *such* a picture, with the various groups passing and repassing against the browned masses of old rock, all carpeted with graceful plants, or emerging from under the broad sweeping branches of the large chestnut-trees, whose silvery trunks gleamed in the chequered shade! The noise, the laughter, the mad rushing to and fro of ponies and donkeys, regardless where they went, or whom they upset, the vendors of fruit, and pictures, and cakes, all screaming in inharmonious unison, were prodigious.

"*Signora, tanta buona—un bajocco la libbra, frutta fresca freschissima—Ecco signora, guardi, la Madonna, la Madonna del Tufo, il sommo miracolo,* for a halfpenny

—Buy the *Madonna, tanta buona*, for one halfpenny!—*Fiori*—a bouquet—*sua Signoria* must have a flower for the *buona festa—Fiori! Ecco! Fiori! Hi!—Ha!—Venite tutti quanti!*"

The nearer we approached the church the more the Babel increased. The crowd making its way in and out was tremendous. Such kneelings, such kissings, such frantic mutterings of prayers around the altar, now begemmed and bespangled with gold and tinsel! It was the strangest medley. Those who one instant were vociferating, and swearing, and gesticulating, as if possessed by seven devils, the next moment were prostrate on the earth, repeating *Aves* as fast as they could gabble. Girls, who a second before had been looking *such* things out of their lustrous eyes, were now devoutly repeating their coronas, as if such mischievous animals as men were not in existence. Naughty roaring babies, rampaging boys, were schooled into silence. The very dogs which forced themselves in with their masters behaved with orthodox propriety.

Stuck up outside the church was a daub representing an old woman sitting by a table piled with gold, while from beneath the table a monster, neither flesh, fowl, nor fish, glared at her with unearthly eyes—a most hideous beast. An old blind man supported the picture, while his wife, gifted with extraordinary

loquacity, repeated the story—"*Di una vecchia vedovella, miserabile il suo stato, nella città di Milano*" ("of an old widow in wretched misery living in the city of Milan").

An immense crowd speedily assembled.

"*Signori Cristiani, per l'amore della Madonna,* give me a penny!" cried the blind man in a hollow voice, which served as a kind of under-current, in the style of a Greek chorus, to the shouts of his wife, who repeated the wonderful adventures of Caterina and the *Fantasmo.*

"*Ascoltate*—listen—*excellenze* all and every one—listen while I relate the miserable story of the *vedovella* of Milano. One night, in a vision, she heard a voice—surely it was the voice of the *diavolo* himself—and the voice said: 'Go, Caterina, to the *loteria,* and choose the number 5; thou shalt win—*v'è lo prometto.*' When morning was come, Caterina went, but the gold—she had no gold to buy his lottery ticket." . . . .

Here the woman paused.

"*Cristiani,* great, noble, excellent signors, for the love of our *own* Madonna, give me a *bajocco!*" groaned out her husband.

A few pieces clinked in his bag.

"A neighbour, *sua amica*—a loving and kind neighbour, *tanta Cristiana,* had no gold, but lent Caterina a counterpane when she asked for it, which the wicked

Caterina (ah! *peccatrice!*) went and pawned. Yes, pawned the counterpane her friend had lent her, because she said she was cold and *povera, povera. Ahi! la povertà! Miseri noi.* Then with the money she bought the number, and gained the prize—*si, amici miei,* Caterina gained a great prize. But her friend, *quella Cristiana che non era Cristiana*—(that Christian who was no Christian)—having discovered by chance what had happened, possessed by the *demonio* (all the saints guard us from the temptation of the devil!), full of envy and rage, whispered it into the ear of her *cavaliere—un certo carabiniere*—who spoke and said: 'Maria, I know how that money is to be got.' Then that sinner, the *carabiniere,* took pitch, and paint, and hair, and blood, and bones, and in an instant made himself into a horrible *Fantasmo,* and at midnight, when the pale dead walk forth from their graves in winding-sheets, this *scellerato*——"

The blind man, who had long been threatening an interruption, was no longer to be appeased.

"*Excellenze,* by the pains of purgatory, a *bajocco!* I will pray for you all, *buoni Cristiani,* seven *Aves,* and four *Glorias. Cristiani, signori,* listen—I will pray—may your souls rest in peace—a *bajocco*—a single one. Excellent good countrymen, for the sake of my wife's fine *racconto,* money, *per pietà!*"

"*Zigarri, zigarri,* good *zigarri!*" broke in from the other side a limping beggar, thinking the moment opportune to sell his wares while the crowd was collected. But this new actor on the scene was summarily ejected by the united efforts of the crowd, now deeply interested in the *orrido Fantasmo* and the blind man's wife, who fought like a cur who finds another of his species prowling on his peculiar walk.

"Thanking the excellent company for the charity shown to the poor *cieco* my husband, and with the *permesso* of the *società*, I shall recommence. This wicked *scellerato* the *carabiniere* hid himself in Caterina's room, and in the silence of the night, after making certain fearful *rumori* such as the devils do in the Inferno, he spoke in these words:—

"'Caterina, Caterina, in the power of the Evil One art thou; give me the money, or I carry thee in my claws swift off to hell.'"

"*Ah! Cristiani, pensa di dolori del inferno!* help us, good friends—money—a *bajocco!*" cried the *cieco.*

But at this interesting moment, when all stood transfixed in horrified curiosity (especially one pretty girl sitting at a table hard by, drinking wine, who by turns flirted with a crowd of *cavalieri*, then, growing pale at all these images of the devil and purgatory, crossed herself devoutly), the arrival of a large party

of American friends from Albano deprived us of the conclusion of this lamentable tragedy.

By this time numerous parties had bivouacked in the woods, and were preparing to dine under the shade of the chestnut-trees. The orthodox dish on this day was roast pig, that unclean animal being in some incomprehensible manner connected with the festa of the Madonna. Roast pig was selling piping hot in all directions, and very good it looked; but as we had a famous *chef* at home, we preferred domestic luxuries, with plates and spoons, to an Arcadian meal on the ground.

In the evening fireworks were let off just under our house, and exceedingly brilliant they were—fountains of fire, lakes of sulphur emitting blue sparks, rockets for a moment mocking the mildly-twinkling stars, then Icarus-like falling back in glittering showers. We had a temple of silver, mountains of gold, and all sorts of gaudy marvels, concluding with a grand *girandola* that shot forth a world of light, popping and fizzing like an angry monster. Then calm, unsullied night closed over the moving scene; and the moon rode high, casting gigantic shadows over the vague space below. So ended the great festa day at Rocca di Papa.

Our great man here is the baker, who stands all day smoking within the *portone* of his house, his red

cap hitched on one side of his head. A jolly dog is the baker, Teresina's lover, as all the world knows, for the *società* go to his house every evening to a kind of club, and drink wine and play cards until far into the night, making the little street echo to their carouse. What roars of laughter, what riotous, joyous choruses have often "murdered sleep" from over the way! Sometimes they have an *accademia* and really delightful music. A flute is particularly "brave" on these occasions, and sends forth the most aërial music, wafted to us by the night breezes. Then there is a guitar twanging joyous *ritornelli*, recalling bright Venice, with its dark, gliding gondolas, its love and its poetry. At other times a solitary song is heard. Now, could you believe that these melodious whispers, floating "through regions mild and calm," are all emanations from the baker's; and that when the delicious music has sighed away, there is a rude riotous chorus, and shouts of *Bis* and *Bravo*, bringing one's poetic enthusiasm down suddenly to zero? Such are the vivid contrasts of our mountain home—idyllic poetry and *bourgeois* prose.

A principal character at the baker's is the Sicilian *cavaliere*, a dot of a man, made up altogether of a stentorian voice—a very Goliath to speak withal, who talks as fast as Figaro in a passion, and thumps the

table as he gives you the latest news from Rome in a quite Neapolitan shower of words. Count Dionigi, who lodges below, abominates the baker and his jovial club, and looks indignant if you admire the music. Dionigi, called by the Italians *Fosseficato*, or the Fossil, lives at Cività Lavinia, the ancient Lanuvium, and has never, during the last fifty years, been known to change one iota—neither growing older nor younger, fatter nor thinner, but remaining ever the same starched little figure, with the same well-regulated grey hair. If all the world were turned into dust, not a grain would rest on his immaculate blue coat—dust and that coat are as antagonistic as the poles. Dionigi has never married. A wife would be *de trop* to such a male old maid; and as for children—pah! When he comes to see me he makes a *riverenza* like a dancing-master, rises on his toes, and gracefully advancing, repeats that I am "an angel, a divinity," with a stiff little bow at the close of each well-used phrase. Then down he sits, hat in hand, crossing his tiny knees—the funny little manikin! His exits are capital; he rises, bows, and says "he will raise the *incomodo*" (*leva l'incomodo*); shoulders his stick, which always plays a principal part in his little drama; stands erect; bows; retreats; then bows again, repeating at each move, "*I miei rispetti—Signora bella, amabile*"—spreading his polite blessings

from side to side like a priest at mass. They say Dionigi has something to do with a very romantic story, of which I am anxious to learn the particulars.

Among our characters, Giuseppe della Fante, our *maestro di casa*, must not be forgotten; he who, according to his own account, is sprung from a decayed Roman family, has once been a soldier, and cannot accommodate himself pleasantly to his altered fortunes. There he stands at the baker's door, cigar in mouth, with his great moustache, military cap, full French trousers, big enough to make an ordinary woman's petticoat, and his spurs—those eternal spurs! Seeing that he never rides more than once a week, and then on the back of a wretched pony, those spurs are a mystery to us. "*Ma*," as the Italians say, "*fanno impressione.*" Certainly there is some sympathetic affinity between the extinct glories of the Della Fante line and those spurs in Giuseppe's mind. How he chaffs with the pretty maidens skipping in to buy bread! How he gossips with the doctor and the *priore!* How he patronises the *carabinieri*, and kicks the dirty urchins who presume to touch those sacred spurs! All this and much more you should see with your own eyes. He is a regular Italian, violent, excitable, impressionable, easily offended, yet so devoted,

generous, and self-forgetting, that one really ends by admiring his very faults. Speak kindly to him, and tears spring up like dewdrops in his sparkling, brigand-looking eyes; ask him to do any wonderful thing—to ride to Rome in an hour, to scale a precipice for the sake of a flower, to hunt the woods for a favourite bird —and he rushes forth with as chivalrous a good-will as the veriest carpet-knight that ever donned a lady's scarf.

The quarrels he gets into, the imaginary battles he fights, the bloody recitals with which he regales the select audience at the baker's—recitals about stilettoes and pistols, encounters with banditti, gaping wounds, threats of vengeance and extermination against his enemies generally—*bagatelle! come vi pare!* Then the adventures he has encountered (Heaven only knows whether they be romance or truth)—the grandeur of his appearance on festa days, his tender care of the children, with whom, if they are merry, he romps after the fashion of an old dog lying down to be kicked —his savage ill-humour if his dignity be offended—his bursts of passion—his humble apologies—his alternate smiles and frowns, make up quite an epitome of human life. Poor Giuseppe, genuine child of the South, thou hast the vices and virtues of thy race and of thy clime, but thou hast an honest and a kindly heart!

VIII.

Feast of SS. Peter and Paul—St. Peter's Illuminated—The Girandola.

THE Feast of SS. Peter and Paul is the birthday of Rome. Heat and the fear of malaria have by that time driven every foreigner away—which was to me an especial recommendation. So, in the early morning, before the mid-day sun had become dangerously hot, I traversed the parched Campagna, and found myself at the Lateran Gate.

Everything told of heat and a raging Italian sun. People sat pale and exhausted at the shop-doors, armed with paper whisks with which languidly to drive away the flies; little extempore fountains bubbled up on tiny tables spread with delicious pulpy lemons, and *acque dolci* (sweet drinks) cooled with fresh vine-leaves. Every woman and child we passed, of whatever degree, carried a fan, which she used industriously; the very beggars shook their tin boxes in one hand, and fanned themselves with the other. All labours, trades, and occupations were carried on in the streets, which, never

too wide, were now almost choked up. Shoemakers were making shoes; tailors were sitting cross-legged on tables squeezed up against their house-walls; women were cutting and stitching on low stools, surrounded by their gipsy-eyed progeny; girls were combing each other's hair (often a severe test of friendship in hot weather); and men were walking under the eaves with their hats in their hands, all pale, worn, exhausted. The three-legged tables outside the cafés were crowded with sleepy or sleeping men: the scarcely-awake were indulging in ices or drinks—the sleepers were lying about in the strangest attitudes; for an Italian could sleep, I believe, on one leg, if he tried. It being about noon, the street kitchens were in active operation—fish, flesh, and fowl hissing and broiling over pans of charcoal; and stands of fruit, apricots, figs, and cherries, ripe and ready to drop into one's mouth.

When we reached the English quarter, the Piazza di Spagna, great were the emptiness and the desolation. The windows in the hotels were hermetically sealed, and the doors shut. Piale's library was a wilderness. Not a soul was to be seen. The long flight of the Trinità steps was scorching and vacant. The little fountains at its base bubbled in an utter solitude. No groups of peasants were lounging there *en tableaux*. The man who does the venerable father with long beard and

patriarchal garments—a special rascal; and the young man with the high-art features, who does the saints and apostles with a glory round his head; the beauty-peasant with yards of white drapery folded over her glossy braids, under which glow the impudent glancing eyes, coral beads, and gold necklace—all gone, driven out by the heat! Gone, too, was that dear little boy who sat for an angel when he was not stretching out his little dimpled hand, asking, like Oliver, for "more," and his father, clad in sheep-skins, who, with slouched hat and ragged cloak, did the everlasting conspirator.

Such is Rome in the dog-days—no life, no carriages, no sound; like the enchanted city in the Arabian Nights, all lay sunk in slumber. We descended, as the polite French say, at the Palazzo M——, where apartments had been secured—a noble residence, big enough to take up one side of a square, with *salons* so large that people looked dim and misty at the further end. That very evening St. Peter's was to be illuminated; so, after fortifying ourselves with an excellent dinner, sent in piping hot in a tin box from a neighbouring *trattoria*, and further recruiting ourselves by draughts of refreshing Orvieto out of wicker bottles, we attained that contented and happy state of mind proper to the eve of a great festa. Evening, delicious, balmy evening;

had come; the breeze swept through the streets, and the stars peeped out as we started—together with hundreds and thousands of the Pope's undutiful subjects—for St. Peter's. On these grand occasions the Ponte Sant' Angelo is closed to the vulgar, who are obliged to pass over the Tiber into the Trastevere. Plunging into the narrow streets that lead thither, the site of the home of Raphael's Fornarina was pointed out to me. It is now a small two-windowed house, the lower portion used as a magazine of herbs—Anglicè, the greengrocery business. While our carriage is slowly advancing through labyrinths of streets, every now and then stopped by the *carabinieri* (here acting as policemen), who rush upon us with drawn swords, I will tell my readers the real story of Raphael and the Fornarina.

When Raphael was painting his beautiful frescoes in the Farnesina Palace in the Trastevere, he passed daily over the bridge and through this narrow street to his work. One day, it is said, he saw a beautiful black-haired girl, of the voluptuous type painters love so well, bathing her white feet in the waters of the Tiber. From that hour all peace of mind forsook him, and he forgot even art in his earnest desire to be loved by her. The baker's daughter, however, was already provided with a lover, a certain fierce soldier stained with the blood of many battles, who aspired to the possession

of this peerless beauty. Egidio had no refinement of soul, no "intellect of love;" but the outward charms of the girl had touched him, and he swore that if any one else presumed to approach her, he would finish him with a *stoccata*. Catterinella, never having known the delicious frenzy of love, had hitherto submitted with that grace which arises from perfect indifference to the advances of the soldier. He often came to her father's shop, and gossiped and smoked, until she grew used to him, and Egidio, in a manner, became domesticated. But when Raphael came also, and talked, and cast loving glances out of his beautiful eyes at Catterinella, she began to detest the soldier, and to feel all the joys and pains of first love. Raphael not only rapidly insinuated himself into her heart, but, with that amiability and grace which he so eminently possessed, fascinated even the rough baker himself. He was too much absorbed in his art to spend much time at the shop, but that very art afforded him the readiest means of advancing his suit. He asked Giuseppe to allow his daughter to sit to him for her picture; and he, though but a common vulgar tradesman, still had enough respect for the fine arts, then so generally cultivated in Rome, to consider the request as a compliment, and to comply. But he made Raphael promise never to mention his compliance, both out of

regard to Catterinella's fair fame, and for fear of the rough soldier, Egidio, whose blind jealousy might prompt him to commit some violence. When Catterinella first went to Raphael's studio it was secretly and cautiously, and accompanied by her mother; but so frequent were the visits of Egidio, and so ardent his passion for Catterinella, that it was impossible for their absence not to raise his suspicions. One day when they had left the shop, as they supposed unobserved, he watched them, and, seeing them enter a doorway and ascend a staircase, followed. The door was inadvertently left open. Egidio entered, and stealing noiselessly into the spacious studio, hid himself among some lumber. Unable to control his fierce passions at seeing Catterinella seated opposite Raphael, Egidio drew his stiletto and rushed on the painter, who, at that very instant poising his brush in the air, was intently and passionately examining the Fornarina's features. The women, horrified at the sudden apparition of Egidio, his naked dagger and horrid looks, screamed aloud; but Raphael, unarmed as he was, rose and faced his assailant. No sooner did Egidio recognise Sanzio as the detested rival whom he was about to murder—Sanzio, whom he regarded as a deity, whom he had heard celebrated as the very wonder of the world—than he stood transfixed, and the stiletto dropped from his hand. A few

inarticulate words of excuse and prayers for pardon fell from his lips. Touched by the humane looks of Raphael, who gazed on him with a kind of pitying astonishment, Egidio endeavoured, in broken words, to explain the motives which had induced this murderous attack. He spoke of his love; he pleaded his jealousy. Then he turned towards the affrighted Catterinella, who, scared by his fierce looks, scarcely dared to raise her head, while he himself, speaking with ill-suppressed passion, implored her to be calm. He assured her he would not injure her, but he conjured her, by all she held most sacred, to tell him if she really loved him. Catterinella, inspired by the passionate excitement of the moment, forgot her fears of Egidio, his cruelty, his jealousy; she forgot all save Raphael—the sun under whose rays she had expanded into a new and delicious life—Raphael, the god of her idolatry, who stood pale and speechless before her. Raising her eyes to his face, she acknowledged the love she had long secretly cherished in her heart, and confessed in faltering accents that he was dear to her beyond all other mortals. Egidio was struck dumb. Seizing his dagger, which had fallen on the floor, he rushed from the studio. Relieved from the fascination of Raphael's countenance and majestic presence, Egidio, grasping his weapon in his hand, resolved to return and murder

him; but when he remembered the words of Catterinella—when he recalled those passionate words in which she had confessed her love—his resolution again changed. "Why kill him because she loves me no longer?" exclaimed he. Honour and despair strove in the breast of the savage soldier. Love, hope, life—all had passed into the possession of another, and that other a man so godlike that he could scarcely, even in the wild paroxysms of his rage, wonder at the preference. His violent nature could not endure such torture, and, in utter despair, he plunged into his own breast the weapon he had raised against Sanzio.

As we turned into the Lungara every palace was illuminated with red lights. The immense Corsini Palace shone out brilliantly, and looked the very image of a magnificent feudal residence. Lights glittered along its immense façade, row above row to the very roof, while at intervals along the street were planted huge torches of burning pitch that blazed and flashed and cast ruddy unearthly tints on the white palace behind, while great bonfires of tar-barrels, poked up by men with long poles, flared away on the ground. Immovable in the doorway stood the porter, *bâton* in hand—a mass of lace, badges, and cocked hat, evidently convinced that the whole dignity of the Corsini line consisted in his majestic deportment on so auspicious

an occasion. A little crowding, some swearing, and a great amount of butting from the *carabinieri*, who ride full tilt at man, horse, or carriage that offends them, and we were within the colonnade of St. Peter's, that noble colonnade now glittering with lights, whose outstretched arms seemed to clasp in one embrace all the people of the universe. Never does St. Peter's look so beautiful as when illuminated. The magnificent building, with its encircling colonnades; its topmost cupola; its population of saints, prophets, angels, and apostles crowding the roof; and the cross surmounting all, hangs amid the very stars, a glittering vision. It is not in the power of words to convey any adequate notion of St. Peter's that night; each pillar, each arch in the mighty structure was marked out by lines of mellowed light below, above, around, not massed in any one place, but gracefully following the lines and undulations of the vast fabric.

For awhile we contemplated what is called the *silver* illumination, when the lights are veiled. Exactly one hour and a quarter after the first hour of night a cannon was fired from the fort of Sant' Angelo. The harmonious bells of St. Peter's tolled out in response, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, streams of ruddy light flashed up from below into the colonnades, marking their elegant outlines, and revealing

interminable vistas of mysterious gloom through a thousand glittering columns. What had been pale subdued light now blazed forth in flakes of ruddy fire. The great basilica was enveloped in streams of quivering brightness, its gigantic front, white as alabaster, standing out with a strange clearness on a background of flames. Great vases of burning pitch, provided as if by enchantment, appeared suddenly to burst out between every column in the vast colonnade; every statue burned with a living light, that rose up and flared, as the wind caught the forked flames, like a universal conflagration. The cupola especially, beautifully relieved by the dark sky behind, flashed out in a blaze of the most dazzling splendour; while above, surmounting all, the radiant cross shone with indescribable brilliancy—a brand as it were snatched from heaven. It was beautiful to see the gushing fountains reflecting thousands of lamps in their pure water; shooting up in liquid pillars to fall back a foamy mass of molten silver; cooling the air and sending out clouds of delicious spray. Then the bells broke forth in merry chimes, deep-toned and musical; military bands struck up in the piazza; and the cannon from Sant' Angelo boomed distinctly above all other sounds.

Next morning (St. Peter's Day) we rose very early,

to attend high mass at St. Peter's Church, the ceremonies being precisely similar to those which take place at Easter, with this notable difference, that Romans, not English and Americans, form the congregation. Every one flocked to the all-embracing arms of that great piazza, and we soon fell into a long line of carriages slowly advancing towards the basilica. Again we crossed the muddy Tiber, its volume much lessened by the rainless summer. The houses and palaces bordering the river, always of a peculiarly mellow warm tint, now looked baked with the fierce heat. Clouds of fine small dust rose in the light summer breeze. Altogether, it was a great relief to be again engulfed in the narrow, shady streets of the Trastevere. Every passage and cranny leading to St. Peter's was choked and overflowing with an ever-increasing multitude. They came in boats; they came in grand equipages; in humble *baroccini;* on foot; to worship at that magnificent shrine. I could not form one of this national procession towards Rome's great basilica without recalling the famous names of royal and saintly pilgrims that have consecrated the well-worn path along which we passed: the warlike Emperor Constantine, after the golden cross was revealed to him on the hill of Monte Mario; the great Theodosius, his successor, who came to beg a blessing

at this altar; and the brave Belisarius, who offered up his laurels there. That world-ravager, ferocious Totila, came also in a subdued and contrite spirit; and even Alaric, the so-called "Scourge of God," after laying waste the surrounding city, with noble inconsistency spared this glorious basilica. Many, too, came from our own country; the Saxon Cedwella, and Offa, and Concred, kings all of the Heptarchy, and our own royal Alfred in his young days, making, as it were, "the grand tour." Othos and Henrys from Germany flocked here from royal palace and burgh; and St. Cunigunda, the mediæval saint-queen, whose romantic story lends such a charm to many a German ode. Emperors also from the East, and kings from the far western shores of Scotland; also that great northern Cæsar, Charlemagne, the type of Christian chivalry, four times visited St. Peter's. On the last occasion, he made such concessions to the Papal See, that the grateful Pope, Leo III., granted to him the style and title of "Most Pious, August, Pacific, and Victorious Emperor of the Romans"—designations somewhat anomalous and inconsistent, which might, however, be willingly accepted, with all their discrepancies, by a certain emperor of our own time. The great saints, too, must not be forgotten — Augustine, and Chrysostom, and Jerome, and many others

of world-wide fame who journeyed here to pray, to perform penance, to fulfil vows, or to receive honours.

Streams of people spread over the piazza, and, mounting the steps, were engulfed by the great portals. We entered. The mellow light of morning subdued the too glaring details of the florid architecture. The church was in grand gala, walls and pillars draped with red and gold, assimilating harmoniously with the brilliant coloured marbles and mosaics. The cupola, rising like a firmament, shone in the slanting rays of the morning sun—angels, saints, and prophets emblazoned in bright colours on the golden frescoes. Beneath, the altar was spread with the costliest vessels of gold, chalices, cups, salvers, and crosses carved by the hands of Cellini or Bramante, all radiant with sparkling jewels.

On either side were enclosures prepared for the ladies, who came in black veils and dresses *de rigueur;* but instead of the irreverent Easter crowd rushing, pushing, laughing, and talking, as if in the crush-room of the opera, the seats were thinly occupied by a sprinkling of ladies, whose devout looks showed that they came to pray, and not to stare. The tribune behind the high-altar was hung with crimson, and to the left stood a throne prepared for the Pope. Down

the central aisle an avenue was formed by the civic guard and the quaint Swiss soldiers, through which his Holiness was to pass. We were scarcely settled when a hush and a general motion of expectation announced that the Pope had arrived at the central door. Slowly and silently the magnificent procession passed up towards the altar. First came the Swiss guards, and the chamberlains in red silk. Then Pius, seated on the "gestorial" chair or throne, glittering with gold, purple, and crimson, wearing his triple crown, and habited in robes of white. Over him was borne a dais of crimson and gold, while beside him were carried two great fans of peacock's feathers, typical of immortality. There is a look of Eastern magnificence about these fans extremely striking. The Pope, calm and majestic, dispensed blessings as he passed with the air of one rapt in deep devotion. He was followed by the entire Sacred College, all aglow with crimson and guipure lace, a sight calculated to break any lady's heart on the score of misplaced finery. Chaplains, secretaries, and chamberlains (mere minnows to these ecclesiastical Tritons) fluttered in their rear, followed by files of the superbly-dressed Guardia Nobile, all picked men, tall, graceful, handsome; disciplined in the encounters of social warfare and "carpet knighthood;" now superb in glistening helmets,

short scarlet mantles, and a generally classic air, reminding one of Pollio in *Norma*, whose social line of conduct, as well as outward costume, they are said to emulate. The Pope was now seated on his throne, and the mass began.

It is to my mind a fatal want in the otherwise noble ceremonial of the Papal mass at St. Peter's that the music is entirely vocal. Part-singing, however perfect, is monotonous. The Pope's famous choristers are always invisible, caged like singing-birds in a golden-latticed gallery. The Gregorian chant, although admirable as mediæval music, becomes wearisome after two hours' duration, and the mass is long to exhaustion. The Pope stands, walks, and kneels, sometimes at his throne, sometimes at the high-altar, sometimes alone, and sometimes surrounded by the cardinals. One wonders how he can remember such constant changes, unless one happens to know there is an officer attached to the Papal court whose sole business it is to prompt him, and to keep him and the cardinals "well posted up" in their daily duties—what dresses to wear, what to "eat, drink, and avoid." Sometimes there is a pause, the music ceases, the Pope and cardinals sit enthroned (Anglicè, rest themselves), and the golden vessels are moved and removed on the high-altar. During one of these pauses I looked round at the

groups near the high-altar (where the mere vulgar crowd is not allowed to penetrate), and wondered at the curiously mediæval aspect of the scene. Here were party-coloured Swiss guards, red, yellow, and black, with steel caps and corslets, commanded by officers in complete armour of polished steel inlaid with gold, some actually wearing steel-chain tunics over crimson velvet, with golden helmets, so that when two or three whispered together they instantly formed a picture for Maclise — Papal chamberlains, picturesque in high Elizabethan ruffs, doublets, gold chains, orders, long hose, and rosetted shoes; regular Sir Walter Raleighs, and, like him, remnants of a century when Spain ruled European fashions as France does now —priests breaking the mundane pageant here and there, and reminding one of the mass still proceeding (which, by reason of its length and pauses, seemed over long before it really was), in every kind, colour, and variety of gold-embroidered vestments—officers in dark uniforms, and officers in white uniforms, diligently keeping back masses of Roman peasants, gaudy as butterflies as to body and petticoat, and quite laden with chains and crosses, earrings and flowers, gold, silver, and pearls; many of them wondrously handsome women. To all these add rows of black-veiled ladies

sitting on either side in the reserved seats, backed by the many-coloured walls rich with mosaics and variegated marbles up to the very cupola, where, under a glare of light, the four gigantic Evangelists in the spandrils of the arches float in a haze of golden sunshine.

Again we settled down to the mass. The Pope advanced to the altar, denuded of mitre and royal trappings, and wearing a plain white dress. The music ceased; the attendant prelates retired; every knee was bent; every head bowed in seeming devotion. Alone on the steps of the altar stood that venerable old man, his hands clasped over the elements, his eyes turned to heaven. While he communicated, the silence was positively awful. Then, stealing around, came the soft sounds of the silver trumpets, low and plaintive, at first, as wailing spirits, then swelling forth in a hosanna of joy and praise. The Pope, holding in his hand the host, turned to the four quarters of the globe. The *Agnus Dei* was chanted; the Pope resumed his robes and retired as he came, bestowing blessings around; and the crowd, ebbing and flowing like a human sea, cast its vast waves through every open door into the piazza beyond, where the burning sunshine caught and absorbed them in its rays. We, too, with these thou-

sands of living victims, were ruthlessly clutched by that burning monster, the sun, waiting to devour us the instant we left the kindly shelter of the cool sanctuary.

But the celebrations of Rome's great festa to her patron saint were not yet over. Magnificent pleasures were yet awaiting us in the Piazza del Popolo at the first hour of night. The piazza is now densely filled. The fountains and obelisks rise out of acres of pleasure-loving Romans; galleries are erected in the porticoes of the twin churches opposite the Flaminian Gate. Every window is filled, and every eye turned in expectant eagerness towards the Pincian Hill, where, amid lofty terraces and sculptured trophies, gigantic statues and dark ilex woods, the *girandola* (fire-works) is to be exhibited. Meanwhile, the usual fanning and consuming of ices and of sweet drinks goes on among the Roman princesses, seated on a raised estrade, looking as haughty and unpleasant as any classical Cornelias or Volumnias that history could furnish.

The herald cannon sound, and up fly millions of rockets, descending in blue, red, purple, and yellow stars. When these brilliant comets allow us to look round, the summit of the Pincian is transformed into a great temple of fire, enclosed by walls of quivering

crystal, broken by niches filled with fiery statues—a temple such as Vulcan might have reared to Venus in the infernal shades.

Now volleys of deafening cannon rattle till one's ears ache, and, behold! overlapping streams of liquid fire rush down the steep sides of the Pincian into the piazza, and mysteriously disappear in showers of golden sparks, which the crowd struggles to catch; but, lo! they are gone! Then we have an *intermezzo* of rockets and catherine-wheels, the cannons all the time outdoing one another; and now a burning palace appears, with great halls and galleries, and endless arcades and colonnades, in fiery perspective, red with palpitating flames. Such a palace might have suited the ghosts in Vathek, condemned to wander hither and thither for ever through boundless vaults of fire, clasping a flaming heart under their folds of shadowy drapery.

I could not tell all the wonderful tricks and changes of these marvellous fireworks. The enchanter Merlin never terrified his enemies with more surprising displays of his transforming art. As a final triumph, the whole Pincian became the crater of a horrible volcano, belching forth fire and flames, while the roar of cannon mimicked the thunders of the labouring mountain. Red lava-streams rushed down in every direction,

and millions of rockets shot up into the heavens, to fall back bright and glittering, like planets fallen from their spheres.

A moment more, and all was over. The moon shone down serenely in a soft twilight, casting pale lights on the statues and terraced galleries, as if all else had been a disordered dream.

IX.

A Mediæval City—The Sienese—The Piazza—The Palio.

BEFORE settling at Florence we were to spend the early winter at Siena, at which place I resume my diary.

How the railway ever got to Siena is wonderful. It is the one single mark the present century has been permitted to make there, and that only by way of visiting-card, well outside the gates—otherwise we are entirely in the middle ages; our last news, what dress Bianca Capello wore at the Florence ball, how insolent she was, and how angry the Grand Duchess Johanna looked; or the probable marriage of Marie de Medicis with Henri Quatre, if the Pope will allow the divorce from Queen Margot. Indeed, it seems but a few years ago since Charles V. presented a fine portrait of himself by Holbein, as a legacy to the Sienese citizens. Cæsar Borgia, too, in his slashed velvet suit and fine Mechlin ruffles, how he swaggered about the Piazza, and in and out the Palazzo Pubblico, ogling every pretty woman he saw—only he saw but

few; for the Sienese all shut themselves up while he stayed, being alarmed by the fate of poor Ginevra, who was assassinated because she would not give up her lover, Ettore Fieramosca, to please him. Low enough now he lies, as well as his shameless old father—both gone to give account to the Archangel Gabriel of the poisons they concocted and the Romans they killed!

We arrived by the incongruous rail which, quite abashed, folds itself up in a deep valley, and is almost invisible. There stands the stout old city, unchanged since the days of the Triumvirate, crowning a precipitous hill, or rather, many hills; the grand old walls, baked golden yellow by the suns of many centuries, running obstinately up hill and down dale, broken here and there by a cypress wood, or a huge church jutting out on a high promontory, or a castle with quaint towers, mullions, buttresses, and battlements along the sky-line. Always in the middle ages, we ignore the existence of gunpowder as a gross affront to our understandings, and deem these walls impregnable.

Darkening the walls at intervals by deep shadows, rise lofty machicolated gates flanked by turrets, giant Cerberuses keeping watch, hostile and grim outwardly; but lit up within by richest frescoes of virgins and saints and angels, so that all who leave the city can see them hovering aloft, and say their passing

Ave, and return thanks for having been preserved from falling headlong down those steep and dreadful *sdruccioli* (slides), which descend from the main streets into the bowels of the city with a precipitousness perfectly astounding to the constructive sense.

You may enter Siena if you please by the Camollia Gate, where quite the other day the sons of Remus came riding up in an easy way from Rome, on finding that their uncle Romulus, though ostensibly remarkably civil, was planning for them an immediate descent into the Tartarean fields to join their father.

The very conversation which roused the suspicions of these ingenuous youths is related in an old chronicle, together with all other particulars of their arrival at Siena; also telling how this same gate came to be called Camollia from their tutor Camillus, and how they lived and died here, setting up the wolf of the Capitol as their badge at the corners of the street, as may be seen still to this day.

Once past the gates, be the time day or night, hottest mid-day or wildest tramontana wind, the lofty cavernous streets engulf you. Every second building is a grim Gothic palace, with great shelving roof, solid rustic basement, much rich tracing and delicate handling about the arched windows and cornices, and wearing withal a certain *noli me tangere*

look that even now keeps the citizen in his place, and teaches him how God, at the beginning, created noble and vile, and divided the ark accordingly.

Nearly all the historic families of Rome, including the fugitive sons of Remus, trace the family cradle to Siena; and as each great family is "blessed," as the word is, by one or more popes, who enriched his kindred from the pennies of St. Peter, we have here splendid palaces of the Borghese, Chigi, Farnese, Orsini, and Piccolomini. The churches, with the cathedral (that noble extravagance in marble) at the head of the list, would fill a volume; not forgetting the great fountains sung by Dante, and the pictures representing the most mystic of the mediæval schools. But enough: we will descend into the Piazza, the throbbing heart of the living city.

Here we are in the midst of the republic of the middle ages. "Here," says Dante, "is the great field where men live gloriously free, Siena's Square," scorning alike Guelph or Ghibelline, Pope or Kaiser; indignantly rejecting the Countess Matilda, her money and her troops; brutal to the Emperor Charles IV., who, coming here as the protector or tyrant of the Medici type, was torn by the outraged citizens bodily out of his palace, dragged into this square, placed in the centre, and (every aperture, door, and street being

carefully blockaded by troops) left there alone until hunger and cold brought down his imperial stomach, and he was fain to run from group to group entreating to be let out—entreating, however, in vain, until he promised to leave the city. Sure never was anointed emperor so treated!

Neither did the Sienese long suffer the Spaniards under Charles V. Things were made so uncomfortable to this emperor that he could not stay. Against Cæsar Borgia, too, they set up their backs. But times changed at last, when that traitor Pandolfo Petruccio, born of their own blood, sternly bridled them and broke their spirit, so that when the Marquis Marignano came with his great army, sent by the Medici Grand Dukes, they were beaten at Monte Aperto, and forced to bend their necks to the Florentine yoke.

This Piazza, shaped like a bow one thousand feet round, is a perfect picture of a republican forum, where forty thousand men can stand at ease, and every man be seen and heard. On the short side of the bow is the public palace, an architectural episode of the thirteenth century, once red, now mellowed to a tawny grey, with stone cornice, quaint turrets, and fantastic gargoyles; while in the midst rises that lovely tower (*della Mangia*), tall and taper, crowned with a circlet of

whitest stone. In and out, flocks of grey pigeons circle round and round, finding a home in those rich carvings, or beneath the old clock that looks out like an eye in the centre.

Round the Piazza stretches a fringe of feudal palaces; while overhead, above the roofs, rise the cathedral dome and graceful campanile in stripes of black and white marble, those stripes being the arms of the city along with the wolf and cubs.

In these days now passing, the Piazza has assumed the appearance of a Roman circus, and is lined with raised benches up to the first floors of the palaces, save on one side where the ground descends and mattresses cover the walls. It is the race of the *Palio*—games held annually, and identified from the earliest times with Siena.

During the Spanish rule they saw fit to alter the old fashion of the chariot-race, and inaugurated bull-fights; then the bull-fights lapsed into buffalo-fights, and finally settled down to what we are now about to see —horse-races.

The city, from the earliest days, has been divided into *contrade*, or parishes. Each *contrada* has its special church, generally of great antiquity, and each *contrada* is named after some animal or natural object, these names being symbolical of certain trades or customs.

There is the wolf, giraffe, owl, snail, tower, wave, goose, tortoise—in all seventeen. Each has its colours, heralds, pages, music, flags, all the mediæval paraphernalia of republican subdivision.

Moreover, each of these *contrade* is capable of committing forgery, murder, parricide, or any other atrocity, for the honour of its name and members. The close streets are really dangerous to traverse at this time. Each party pulls out its dagger, drinks, swaggers, swears, and fights on its own ground, and is ready to murder any one of an opposite faction with all the ferocity of belligerent states. To be the citizens of a common city is *nothing* unless you belong to the same *contrada.* French and English in the good old days were not more savagely opposed. Perhaps no city in Europe has preserved so unchanged these mediæval feuds and customs.

An offence was lately given by "the Wave" to "the Tower." The Tower swore to have their blood, and a band of *giovanotti* came up out of a dark *sdrucciolo* (slide) descending from the Palazzo Pubblico, in order to hang about in ambush at the mouth of another dark and filthy alley; ready, should a "Wave" surge up on the common shore of the Piazza, to strike it down then and there.

Poor Count Tolomei, the *sindaco* (mayor), a courtly

noble, gentle to a fault, presents at these seasons the appearance of an ill-used man, who has neither slept nor eaten from excess of care. He shrugs his shoulders and casts up his eyes in pantomimic horror of the life he leads by reason of the murderous scum, who are so vicious that no police or military cares to follow them into their holes and dens, where they would rather prefer, on the whole, to cut a man's throat.

Each *contrada* runs a horse at the *Palio*, ridden by a *fantino* wearing the colours of the parish; and this horse and this *fantino* are the incarnation of the honour and glory, evil and good passions, of its *contrada*. The enthusiasm is frantic, and the betting desperate.

This is Wednesday, the 16th August, and we are glad it is come, for there have been rehearsals for four days, twice every day, and the din has been deafening. According to custom, flags have been tossed each day as high as the upper windows, in a kind of quaint dance or triumph, very gracefully executed by the pages of the *contrade*. Then, too, are drums beaten and trumpets sounded within each palace *cortile*, to remind the noble marquis or my lord count—each of whom is "protector" of some *contrade*—that the *Palio* is at hand, and to intimate that a little ready cash will be joyfully received for the purchase of a swift and likely horse (an intimation the noble in

question is very careful to comply with, if he desires to live peaceably at Siena).

We are awaked to-day by the great bell of the Mangia tower and a complication of military music, approaching as nearly as possible to the confusion of Babel. Later come huge bouquets, borne by four pages in full mediæval costume of rich satin, wearing plumed hats, and accompanied by drums. These bouquets are sent as acknowledgments to those nobles who have contributed to the *Palio*. The more popular the man, the larger and choicer the bouquet, which is always accepted with much ceremony.

At six o'clock, when the broiling August sun had somewhat worn itself out, a large company assembled on the great stone balcony of the Chigi Palace, every window on the immense façade being decorated with magnificent red and yellow damask. All round the Piazza these gay trappings marked the lines of the windows, where in each feudal palace stood the living representatives of many historic names.

An enormous crowd, some thirty thousand in number, gradually fill the Piazza, chattering, quarrelling, laughing, screaming. Every seat in the raised amphitheatre is soon taken; and the palace walls are lined as it were with humanity half-way up.

Opposite, there are the noble youths of the Siena

College—the Italian Oxford—in full evening dress; and the *séminaristes* (baby-priests), in blue and red *sottane*. In the centre of the Piazza there is a perfect field of Leghorn hats as big as carriage-wheels, and crops of common fans; for fans are carried by every single female down to mites of two years old, who successfully perform all accepted gyrations, and create a flutter as of ebbing waters. Bands of music break in from time to time with soul-stirring tunes, such as "Garibaldi's Hymn" and "Out of Italy the Stranger." The rumbling of the drums in the different *contrade* sounds in the alleys and side streets, calling together the riders and the procession. The gendarmes are mounted on fat old horses, which, being greatly tormented by the flies, kick and plunge viciously, and send their hoofs into the very faces of the staring populace. Gently and very slowly, with that courtesy natural to Tuscans, these gendarmes "clear the course;" the people gathering, like a flock of sheep, thicker and thicker into the centre. "Clear the course!"—do you understand this, gentle reader? Do you understand that the stones of the Piazza, the granite *lastri*, are "the *course?*" Oh, ye grassy slopes of Ascot and of Derby, green with short clovery turf, cool fragrant carpets embroidered with the early daisy and fragrant violet, and many a gay buttercup and

flaunting dandelion, figure to yourselves, in your luxuriant spring mantle, the hard smooth stones of this iron pavement! Why, look! there are two corners at the bend of the bow with lamp-posts, sharp as any dagger in the lowest *contrada*. There is another beyond just where they are to start, under the Delci Palace; past this, a slippery level; then another corner, and a rapid descent. Sure, never was such a murderous course! Sure none but mediæval blockheads, going on the father-to-son principle, would risk their necks on such a suicidal venture—to say nothing of the poor little horses, dragged from the oozy soil of the forest-covered Maremma to break their slight legs on such a *carrousel!*

Great excitement! The gendarmes, whose courtesy has been abused by some ill-educated roughs, sternly insist, with steadily-serried advance of six deep, on clearing the fatal course. Sienese notables at the club, rank and fashion in the palace balconies, are putting up opera-glasses and lorgnettes, and condescending to be amused. The little priests and the noble undergraduates, quite forgetting themselves, are evidently reprimanded sharply. Bells ring incessantly—the great Mangia bell, the audibly beating heart of the city, in long single strokes. The thirty thousand people become impatient; and the

hoary palace and the big clock, its nether eye well turned on, keep ward over all. A cannon sounds, and from the Via Casato slowly emerges the procession —the first act in this new-old racing-card. The "Wave" *contrada* comes first—four flag-bearers and four pages in full middle-age costume, red and white, the flag-bearers performing as they advance the *gioco* (game) of the flags; quaint and graceful movements, such as you may see figured in Monstrelet; the *fantino*, or jockey, on an unsaddled horse; the racer, on which he is to ride by-and-by, led by a page; in all ten different attendants for each *contrada*. The *fantino* always wears a striped surcoat, of the two colours of his *contrada*, with its symbolic image embroidered on his back in gold. Last of all comes the *carrocciolo*, embodying the visible republic, that always formerly accompanied the troops to battle, and, if taken or damaged, causing a terrible reproach and shame, such as the death of a great sovereign would now occasion. It is to our cynical eyes but a lumbering old cart, square and awkward, on which are grouped the flags of all the *contrade* in a fraternal union that never exists elsewhere.

Military bands and soldiers following excite the populace to madness, who frantically clap their hands. All these *dramatis personæ*, including the *carrocciolo*,

group themselves on an estrade in front of the public palace, and dispose themselves leisurely for enjoyment.

If darkness can be felt, surely silence may, and we all *felt* the pause when every man and every woman drew their breath. Again the cannon thunders, and gaily trotting out from under the dark palace gateway, fifteen little horses with fifteen party-coloured riders appear, and place themselves before a rope stretched across the course—a very necessary precaution, I assure you, for last year the horses pressed against and broke the cord with their chests (and a strong cord too), and floored five men and three horses dead in a heap on the stones.

Now they are marshalled at the rope by a middle-aged gentleman in full evening dress—a queer contrast to the mediæval jockeys. He shows extraordinary courage in placing the horses and dragooning the riders. He gives the signal like children—*uno, due, trè, e via!*—drops his official staff, and jumps aside with what speed he can for the dear life. They are off like the wind, round the first corner, on to the murderous lamp-post, down the descent—whish! See, that horse has hugged the corner, rushed down hill, and is safe. But here, look! this second rider is hurled off against the mattresses lining the house-walls at the fatal corner, or his brains would have been infallibly dashed out on

the pavement. He falls, but, thanks to this protection, is up again, bewildered, but still holding the reins, and so jumps into the saddle again, and rides away. Two others just escape; and two provoking horses won't run. Many are thrown; one horse bolts up a street. Three times they rush round the Piazza, at a risk and with a speed horrible to behold; and each time the ranks are thinner. They ride well, but against all rule, for they belabour each other's heads as much as their horses' sides—very uneducated and mediæval jockeys! Down hill—up again—helter-skelter—horses without riders racing also for the fun! The drum sounds, and it is all over, and the Oca (the goose) has won; and every one knew the Oca would win, because it was the best horse; and a howl, a shriek of exultation, comes up from the crowd, which separates and opens, like the bursting of a dammed-up river.

Then the Oca horse is seized by, at the very least, thirty men and boys, and the *fantino* by as many more, who lift him from his unsaddled horse; and he and the horse are kissed, and hugged, and patted, and rejoiced over, and led, then and there, to the chapel at the bottom of the Mangia tower, where the Madonna stands on the altar, in a forest of flowers, uncovered in honour of the day. And so, surging up and down

among the crowd, man and horse disappear down an alley, to reappear at the church of their own *contrada*, where the priest receives and blesses them both, man and beast, and will hang up the *palio* (or banner) in the sacristy, with the date in gold letters, as a *cosa di devozione.*

For many nights, for many weeks, will all the "Goose" tribe eat, drink, and be merry, defying those who betted against them in very awful oaths, down in low narrow slums in the worst part of Siena, among the tanners, under San Dominic's Church, near the Fontebranda sung by Dante. Close by here stands the house of Santa Caterina, whose father was a tanner, and lived beside the fountain to moisten his hides. And Santa Caterina, all angelic as she was, would have rejoiced too at this victory of her *contrada*, for the glory of the *Palio* is dear to the heart of every Sienese.

X.

From Siena to Orvieto—Cathedral—Chiusi—Etruscan Tombs.

WE leave Siena for two days by the incongruous rail, and plunge into the clay hills lying southward—magnified ant-hills massed one upon the other, without shrub or herb to break the monotony of the grey earth, which is here wrinkled and tormented by countless water-courses. Nature in the South seldom exhibits herself in such repulsive forms.

This hilly desert belting Siena forms the borderland between idyllic Tuscany and Central Italy—Tuscany, with its laughing campagnas, rich with fat mulberries and trellised vines heavy with purple clusters, where bright home-like villas and evergreen groves, well-to-do *poderi* (farms), churches, and convents crown each dimpling hill, and dot the sides of distant Apennines in all the confidence of perfect security; Central Italy, with its high, abrupt mountains, stern and repellent, scored with basaltic chasms, and traversed by vast forests of living oak—sad lonely woods, home of the wild boar or savage swine. Here treeless, dried-

up river-beds divide the valleys, and disappear into reedy lakes, without a vestige of human habitation, so marking the presence of malaria. Every town and city stands high up on rock or mountain—natural fortresses, where no straggling dwellings dare to linger outside the lofty walls. A land of grand, yet awful beauty, suggestive of all that is abrupt, sudden, wonderful; with here an Etruscan city; there a cathedral glittering like a gem; yonder a lake mirroring itself in the fierce sunshine, deep buried in silent woods.

All this time our train has been moving. Here is Asinalunga, where Garibaldi was arrested after Mentana. At Siena no one dared to touch him—he was worshipped; but in this lonely town, tracked by Government spies, he was taken by order of the king to whom he had given Naples. Nothing succeeds like success. Garibaldi failed, and the greatest of modern heroes is banished.

There is necessarily a certain monotony common to railroads; but after passing Torrita the scenery through the valley of the Chiana becomes too grandly savage to be suppressed.

The towns named as the respective stations are miles distant, each crowning its own familiar height. Mountain masses on mountain. To the left there is

a mountain-chain that on its further side borders the Lake of Thrasymene; yonder lie the mountains of Viterbo; to our right are rugged isolated peaks, each bearing a ruined castle, convent, or village, dignified by historic names and lofty position—all majestic, but repulsive.

There, aloft, is Monte Pulciano, on whose sloping terraces grow those grapes (*manna*, as they are called) producing the "king of all wines." Below lies the fair lake, called the Mirror of Monte Pulciano; its desolate flag-bordered shores the home of countless wild fowl, which, aroused by the railway-whistle, circle terrified over its surface.

Here is the Chiusi station, whither we shall by-and-by return. Opposite is Citta della Pieve, a cheerful little town, raising itself out of the unhealthy vapours on an oak-covered hill, the birthplace of Perugino. And now we stop by a bridge, far too large for the shrunken river Arbia, which runs beneath. The doors are opened, and the guard shouts "Orvieto!"

A huge station, a precipitous mountain, and an omnibus—such is the terminus of Orvieto. The line is to be eventually carried on to Rome by Rieti, if Italy escapes bankruptcy.

In many weary zigzags the road ascends a per-

pendicular rock, and we come to understand why the popes of the middle ages fled to Orvieto when pressed by enemies. That poor beaten Medici, Clement VII., for instance, was glad enough to hide his head behind the strong walls we were approaching, after the sack of Rome by that awful sinner the Constable Bourbon.

On a high plateau surrounded by steep precipices, and protected by walls so solid they might be Etruscan, Pelasgic, and Roman all in one—flanked by a ruined fortress within which a band was playing "*Giulia gentil*" to some *saltimbanques* who had set up their nomad tents there, and were riding bare-backed horses and jumping hoops before a ragged crowd—stands Orvieto. Sad groves of olives wave over its walls, and ruins cumber lonely paths along the margin of its rocks.

A dirtier, uglier, more ill-conditioned place than this once Papal city of refuge it would be hard to find. A squalid, insolent population lounge about the narrow streets; here and there a grim old palace tells a tale of former grandeur, as does the small piazza bearing a certain architectural prestige of the *cinque-cento*.

The inn "of the fine arts" (of course a broken-down palazzo) presents the worst specimen of *osteria*—vast, gloomy, cavernous; a great well in the middle of

the cloistered court; dismal stairs; dirty waiters; rooms without doors, yet smelling as if always shut up; discomfort and squalor everywhere.

But is there not the cathedral, like a jewel in an Ethiop's ear, only one street off, and shall we despond?

On the highest part of the city is a square, from which all other buildings reverently recede. If it be not irreverent to liken a cathedral to a fairy palace, I would dare to do it. Of form so wonderful, of size so vast, of proportions so exquisite, in colour so indescribably brilliant, as the sun plays a thousand antics with the fantastic sculptures and glowing mosaics, until they glitter like a kaleidoscope—who can describe it?

Is it not fitter for Titania, or Undine, or Armida, for Kobold, or genius, or enchanter, than for a shrine? Is it an enchanted palace? or a marvellously-wrought casket for some spiritualised Glumdalclitch? or a casket for Cyclopean gems, worked in marble and alabaster, and ornamented by golden mosaics, with a glory of sunshine all around? That wheel window in the centre, above those exquisite sculptures, is surely of finest lace, a thing altogether wrought by fairies, and set there to make earthly artists despair. Books may describe as Italian-Gothic (much more Italian than Gothic) the exquisite façade, broken by three

vast portals, delicately wrought in finest alabaster, the spiral columns, the rich profusion of cornice, buttress, points, pinnacles, gargoyles, statues; but I persist in looking upon the whole as a sublime enchantment, a thing made out of the sunbeams, that may disappear in a moment at a wave of the magician's wand.

On entering, one is brought up suddenly in face of a prosaic reality of marble and stone (no delusion here), in alternate stripes of black and white, similar to the cathedrals of Siena, Lucca, and Pisa, but infinitely inferior. The proportions are fine, but there is no mystery of dimly-lighted, "long-drawn aisles" faintly receding in the pale flutterings of chequered shadows. The lancet windows are full of sun, and the bare rafters of the wooden roof are visible in all their unseemly homeliness. The style of art is decidedly realistic. There is a pervading sense of the infernal rather than the celestial regions, which amounts to a positive odour of brimstone. This decided tendency to the "terrors of the Lord" is strangely discrepant with the joyous spirit of the façade, which is much more pagan than Christian.

At the high-altar are two statues, by Mosca, that defy all the canons of art. Sculpture wrought in a material so grave as marble ought, it is taught, to be calm, if not monumental, and to portray no sudden or accidental attitude. Here we have a semi-heroic

virgin, with a girlish face, probably a portrait; her long hair combed back from an open brow, her form shrouded in ample draperies—starting from her chair with a look of terror that is intensely natural. It is not in the least like a Madonna, "blessed among women;" but a girl alarmed, offended, defiant, fearing attack and meditating defence. Before her kneels the Archangel Gabriel, whose wings twist above his head like a serpent.

The Madonna Chapel to the right, covered with frescoes by Luca Signorelli, Fra Angelico, and Benozzo-Gozzoli, is a paradise for artists. From hence Michel Angelo has boldly transferred some of the finest figures bodily to his great fresco in the Sistine Chapel, especially a majestic Christ in judgment, with arms extended to bless or to curse a prostrate universe. In those days such plagiarisms could be effected.

Old Gozzoli is as careless of form and grotesque in accessories as usual, with that same brilliant and glowing brush (as though the paint were still wet) which we remember at Pisa. Luca Signorelli revels as ever in wildest groups of demons, earthquakes, ruin, fire, fury, and violently foreshortened figures, powerful and astonishing, but so hideous as to shock the artistic sense, like music without melody. There is a haunting sense of study in these forced and tormented attitudes,

a consciousness of anatomical torture, without repose or any sense of grace, common both to the copied and the copier. Both Michel Angelo and Signorelli loved elaborate displays of academic skill rather than that crowning triumph of all true art—beauty.

The reality was worse than the appearance as regarded the new school of "fine arts," to which we now directed our attention, for the food at our inn was atrocious, and the prices were high. We were astir by four o'clock A.M., having been made aware of what had often before painfully forced itself on our attention, viz., that an ironmonger and a blacksmith, of extraordinarily industrious habits, invariably reside in close contiguity to all Italian inns, and that cunningly-devised associations exist throughout Italy expressly for the purpose of "murdering sleep." The members of this association walk the streets sufficiently late to keep them cheerfully alive and noisy until the early risers are abroad, and are habitually hilarious, demonstrative, musical, or belligerent, as the case may be. Much eloquent matter remains unsaid as to the abnormal idiosyncrasies of small Italian towns, and the intense sufferings endured by the innocent and fatigued traveller, who goes to rest under the pleasing delusion that night is dedicated to silence and repose. At six o'clock we were at Chiusi.

We confided ourselves to the care of a small *vetturino* aged ten, proprietor of a tumble-down, dust-covered cabriolet, so antique that it might have carried Sterne.

The boy was furnished with a large pipe, at which he puffed away furiously. Asked how recently he had paid tribute to such early debaucheries, he laughed scornfully and replied, "he had smoked for many years." He professed to know the tombs and the roads, and cracking his whip over the most sluggish and placable of ill-fed ponies, cocked his hat and rattled out of the station.

On a rounded hill a mile off, in the midst of other softly-dimpling hills waving with olives, lies Chiusi, on what was the site of Clusium, the ancient city, the ally of Tarquin, in the days when Lucretia spun.

As we ascend, the hills take strange fantastic shapes, suggestive of *tumuli;* we pass sepulchral portals shaded by cypresses and hewn in the tufa—everything is subterraneous and uncanny. After many efforts on the part of our boy, ill seconded by the stagnant disposition of his horse, we reach a small *locanda*, the "Golden Lion," outside the walls, where children, unwashed from their birth, big pigs, dogs, a grinning idiot crawling on all fours, several horribly-afflicted beggars, and a general background of idlers of that gentlemanly class "who have nothing to do," assemble to meet us. A landlady, fresh from her bed, wearing only a pair of stays and

a thin petticoat, her hair as Nature pleases, her face smeared by contact with domestic utensils, appears. Evidently a very fine lady, however, spite of drawbacks, and so accepted by the group—a lady under eclipse, so to say, but able at any moment to remove the clouds incidental to that early hour, and to blaze forth in full lustre at mass.

We enter, under her guidance, a brick-floored room, dirty past belief. She beckons us on into a *salotto* beyond, which is, if possible, still dirtier, and is furnished with a table, two chairs, and an elaborate portrait of herself gloriously jewelled (as for mass).

There is a pervading odour of fermenting grapes, rotten flax, and decaying apples—an oppressive compound. We rush to the spotted and dirty windows, and fling them open. The sweet herb-scented air and full blaze of sunshine rush in and take possession.

The *cicerone* insisted on by the boy having now arrived —an aged man, who for forty years has done the honours of Porsenna's capital—we mount our crazy vehicle and jolt along charming lanes, through dewy olive-grounds. Not without protest has the *cicerone* been allowed to sit beside the boy, and when we reach a stony perpendicular water-course his indignation boils over, and he is with difficulty restrained from dragging us also bodily out. Protected by the ancient guide and

the unanswerable fact that we have paid to ride, we proceed up the bed of the water-course, and find ourselves in the heart of a great oak forest, the huge silver boles free from all underwood—a Salvator Rosa scene of deep gorges, woody ravines, and rifts of red earth.

Much shaken, we get out, spite of the heat. The boy, from being ejaculatory and abusive, has become sulky under the repeated sneers of the *cicerone*, who considers walking compromising to his dignity. "If," says he, turning solemnly to the boy, "I came here with your *babbo* (daddy), guiding strangers along these same roads a hundred thousand times, and you cannot conduct these, it is because you are an imbecile,—a baby. YOU a *vetturino!* Hi! ho! *per carità*—YOU! By the body of Bacchus! what an idea!"

The boy henceforth collapses, maintains a solemn silence, drives like a machine, splashes through deep holes and dangerous ruts, drags his carriage over rocks, scrapes the edge of precipices, and never opens his mouth but to ask a *buona.mano* when we part.

A conical hill (*tumulus*) rises out of the wood. Passing under a roof of interlacing boughs and thickly-matted shrubs, we reach a low and almost choked-up aperture; then enter a lofty, sepulchral chamber, twenty feet round. A column supports the centre, and from

the side walls open out dark labyrinthine passages, high enough to admit a man on all fours.

This atrium was found adorned with a cornice of solid gold and many beautiful vases. To the right, in a small chamber, one tomb is visible, once containing jewels of such value as to originate the idea that here had lain "Lars Porsenna of Clusium," the various sepulchral labyrinths seeming to identify it as the mausoleum described by Pliny and Varro. But other tombs have furnished other treasures, and labyrinths are found in nearly all these tombs, and were constructed in order that the spirits of the dead might meet. Corn, wine, and oil were always placed beside the dead, whose spirits were believed to perpetuate the wants and wishes of the body.

Three distinct tiers of sepulchral chambers honeycomb this hill of Poggio Gajella, the upper ones being less ornate and spacious. Around it stood a wall of uncemented blocks of stone enclosing a fosse.

Through a track as uneasy as a nightmare, we struggled downhill some two miles to the outskirts of the forest, beside the small Lake of Chiusi. Lying under a barren hill, near a desolate *podere*, is another sepulchre, called the Deposito del Sovrano, containing eight monuments surmounted by images of the dead. These are of coarse workmanship, but remain *in situ*,

resting on rocky benches cut in the sides of the chamber.

Close to Chiusi we visited a third tomb with a painted ceiling of astonishing freshness representing a banquet, at which the guests repose upon skins. This ceiling is bordered by a cornice of dancing figures.

Whether the Etruscans were of Greek origin, or whether these curious frescoes were executed by Greek artists, remains a mystery; but the men and women here represented are undeniably of the Grecian type. These frescoes will soon be destroyed by the damp that oozes from the hill.

Many painted tombs have been filled in; one by the obstinacy of some nuns, and many others by the peasants, who fear that their beasts may be lost or injured.

XI.

The Journey—Monte Oliveto—Razzi.

IT blew a hurricane. The wind swept over the Campagna, howling among the lower hills as if portending an earthquake. Above the barren mountain-tops, murky and threatening with the shadow of the coming storm, lay Monte Oliveto Maggiore, twenty-five miles from Siena, the principal Benedictine establishment of Central Italy.

"What weather shall we have?"

The shock-headed, wild-eyed *vetturino* turned upon us fiercely.

"Weather! *Ah, signori, chi lo sa?* It will be what weather God pleases—how can I tell? With two horses we shall pull along; but the roads, *Domini Deo!* they are straight up like a wall—stay and see! We must go round, too; for if I took the nearest road with this wind, why, *cospetto!* we should be blown over, crossing the mountain. *Avanti!*"

Furious whip-cracking, consequent bounding, struggling, and kicking of the horses, universal jolting,

and great terror on our part! A perpendicular ascent lay before us; the horses jibbed, the carriage ran back.

The *vetturino*, from gaily singing opera airs from *Rigoletto*, broke out into horrible oaths. All that fearful man said was not audible while, leaping from the box, he tore asunder some knots in the harness, the carriage meanwhile tottering on the edge of a deep ravine; but he distinctly cursed the father, the mother, and the ancestors of those who had harnessed the horses. We came also now to know that these horses were put together for the first time, so that their conjointure might be regarded in the light of a doubtful equestrian experiment. The shaft-horse, steady by age and education, was our salvation. The aid, attached to the gig by an improvised bar of wood freshly cut from a roadside tree, was a discursive brute, declining as much as possible to join in the work; now peeping over a precipice, or cantering on in front down a perpendicular descent; now turning round and looking us in the face, quite indifferent as to consequences. Trouble, it was clear, lay between us and Monte Oliveto.

Meanwhile, we mounted higher and higher towards the murky sky waiting to engulf us. The noise of the wind was so terrific that, clinging closely together in a common terror, my companion and I could not hear

each other speak. Our lips moved, but the sound was hurled away in deafening blasts—away over those desolate fields of mountain-tops into everlasting space. We clung to our seat, we clung to our hats, we clung to each other. The carriage tottered; the *vetturino* urged the little horses to a mad gallop. Mountains, mountains on every side—before, behind; north, south, east, west—black with the shadows of hurrying clouds scudding before the furious blast—an arid desolation perfectly appalling. A few isolated hovels stood up sharp against the gloomy cloud-background on the tops of distant heights. Even these were far below.

"While this wind-*burrasca* lasts," screamed our *vetturino* in a momentary lull, "you may bless all the saints—you will get no rain; it is locked up in those clouds—*deluges!* Woe to us if it comes down. *Avanti! Lesto!* Quick, my sons" (to the horses). "Hi! hoo! la—la—la-s-s-s!"

The horses shook their ears and galloped wildly under his lashes.

"See the poor things, how gallant they are! They can hardly stand, the little lambs; yet they would die sooner than stop."

The rough little horses indeed fought bravely, as if conscious that they ought to distance the tempest; but in vain—the wind caught us everywhere.

"Courage, courage! we are near—our miles are almost done! *Ecco*, have I not driven you as if into paradise? These my sons—have they not been lions? Now, anon, we shall be safe in the convent, and the monks will receive you with *tante gentilezze*. You will forget the storm."

Now a precipitous decline, causing our gig to rock ominously, brought us to a defile through clay hills so horrible we screamed aloud.

"A thousand devils!—you have no faith. What is the matter? Here we are. Hi! hoo! la-s-s-s!"

The tired horses relaxed into a walk. Some trees appeared—the first we had seen for hours—bordering the road; and the wind, finding other objects whereon to spend its fury, lulled into sullen moans among the branches. We took a long breath. A deep valley parted the hills below; woods, fields, olives, vineyards, dotted the opposite heights. Through a Gothic gateway, formerly the *clausura*, beyond which no woman passed, a dense cypress wood received us, and a smooth road zigzagged down to the convent, which lies in a snug valley—an enormous pile, church, convent, and farm, with here and there, among the folds of the overhanging cypress woods, a chapel, or shrine, or statue. A low-walled piazza beside the large church of mellow-tinted bricks overhangs a mountain river

splashing far below—a solemn, peaceful spot deep in the bosom of the Apennines.

We were at once welcomed by a gentlemanly monk, dressed in spotless white robes, whose duty it is to conduct strangers over the monastery, which was preserved by the present Government, on the suppression of the religious orders, as a national museum, in the same manner as Monte Cassino, San Francesco d'Assisi, San Marco at Florence, and the Certosa at Pavia.

An arched doorway leads into the cloisters, painted by Razzi and Signorelli in frescoes, of such beauty and artistic significance, it is astonishing that they should be almost unknown even to Italians except by report.

Not only are these works overlooked, but Razzi himself is also unknown out of Italy, although he undoubtedly stood next to Raphael and his master Leonardo in the judgment of contemporaries.

To him were given a certain easy grace and natural inspiration in representing the Madonna and saints; very women, yet bearing the finest expression of devotion, and full of that subtle mysticism which suggests a dual nature, "something of earth, yet much of heaven." Faces more true and real in their humanity than Raphael ever painted. Razzi, the glory of the Sienese school, by his wild and errant life often brought himself and his works into disrepute and ridicule. His wild

fancy and inveterate love of fun needed to be mastered and subdued by the utmost rigours of that sweetly devotional school before the great genius which was in him could be fully developed.

When summoned, as a young man, by the general of the Benedictines to Monte Oliveto from Siena, where he passed most of his life, Razzi was scandalising the republic, not by his wickedness (for of that there is no trace), but by the lawless folly and ribaldry which led him and a band of wild admirers to ridicule all that was venerated and honoured in the quaint old city. He was a thorough Bohemian; and painted, and jeered, and got in and out of scrapes, as is the habit of dwellers in that joyous land.

When this strange being arrived at Monte Oliveto, dressed in picturesque rags, and bringing with him a Noah's ark of tame animals—dogs, chickens, squirrels, doves, tortoises, apes, donkeys, and horses, as well as a tame raven which he had taught to imitate his voice and talk—the astonishment of the whole convent may be conceived. The monks, unused to such a burst from the outer world, were delighted. Razzi brought out his lute and sang sonnets to them; he caricatured them, not too decently; and played, he and his animals, such mad pranks that then and there they nicknamed him *Mattaccio* (archfool), a name that

ever after stank in the nostrils of his courtly contemporaries.

Razzi was commissioned by the general to continue the life of St. Benedict begun by Signorelli, who threw up his work at Chiusi in order to paint at Orvieto. The general, displeased by Razzi's conduct, and uneasy at harbouring such a madcap, criticised his works somewhat freely, declaring that they were painted too much *alla mano* (off-hand).

Razzi, much offended, replied, "that his brush danced to the sound of his coins, and that if more elaborate work was expected he must be better paid."

Better paid he was; but he owed the general a grudge all the same, and took a very characteristic way of revenging himself. One of the frescoes was to represent a particular temptation of St. Benedict, when a band of dancing women are sent to him by a certain priest who hated him, to disturb him at his devotions.

This particular painting Razzi kept carefully covered during its progress, declaring that he meant to astonish the general by its extraordinary beauty.

At length, the whole convent being assembled in eager curiosity, Razzi, surrounded by his pets, tore down the veil, when behold an exquisite painting indeed, filled with lovely forms, but, horror of horrors! they were nude, and the dance was the *cancan* of that day!

The general, indignant beyond words, turned away, sternly commanding the laughing Razzi to destroy such a *scandalum magnatum*. He declared it was his finest work, and wonderfully true to nature; but, seeing the real anger of the general, a compromise was effected, and the too-charming damsels were clad in some kind of drapery, in which state they may still be seen by the curious. However, the general was so shocked that he did all he could to get rid of Razzi, who was unduly hurried in his work in consequence. This hurry is visible. The frescoes are broad and sketchy in treatment, but none the less masterly; every touch is seen, and what touches they are!

Razzi has portrayed himself (in a scene where St. Benedict takes leave of his family) in a yellow cloak trimmed with black, which he got from a Milanese gentleman turned monk; his raven and a little pig at his feet. In these great works St. Benedict passes from boyhood to age—the same, yet with admirably varied expression of time and feeling; of penitence and sorrow, when praying against temptation; of reproach, when the poisoned cup is presented to him by his monks; of prayer and confidence, when raising the drowned boy; of dignity, when he sits as chief among his monks assembled in conclave.

The convent, through which we were led by our

monk, whose heart still clung to the greatness of his order, is immense. The refectory, vaulted and unsupported by pillars, is one of the vastest rooms in Europe; the library, a huge, mediæval hall, filled with a valuable collection of books, is still the boast and the delight of the five solitary fathers, who are all that remain of this once great brotherhood.

XII.

The old Cardinal's Retreat.

WE live in it at the time of this present writing. It is in the Montagnola, an hour distant from Siena, among the mountains bordering the Maremma. The whole country is a forest—such a forest! Giant oaks, wild, scathed, savage-looking, growing on rocky broken ground, with never a stick of underwood; spiky cypresses, gathered up like nosegays; patches of olives—grey, mystic trees said to have paled into that sad tint out of grief for the Divine One who once wept under their shade; vineyards of yellow-leafed grapes, now laden with ruby fruit, clinging to light cane supports. Higher up, fold upon fold of rounded hills, dimpling into each other like the petals of a tulip, and clothed with a dark mantle of evergreen ilex. Beyond lies an expanse of open country broken into long horizontal lines of hills and valleys, waving up and down like the swell of a stormy sea, either utterly barren and desolate, or thickly dotted with villas, churches,

towers, and villages, clinging together as if for company. How easy to give the details; how impossible to paint the varied tints and magic changes of light and shade on this broad horizon; the morning mists; the fervid blue of the mid-day sky; the great white clouds like snow-drifts that come riding up over the dark hill-tops; the ruddy glory of the sunsets! When we came here, the woods were green; now they look as if lighted by living flames. The shadows are those of a furnace, glowing russet, deepest ruby, and richest purple.

In the heart of this fair forest-wilderness a villa stands, built in the Tuscan or rustic style, on a plateau facing the Apennines to the south, and backed by the evergreen forests on the hills. It was built by Cardinal Chigi, brother of Pope Alexander VII., and is still in possession of his descendants. As Louis XIV. created Versailles out of a sand-hill, so the cardinal (attracted to this spot by its exceeding natural beauty) caused this villa-palace to arise out of a virgin forest by the force of gold. He summoned the great architect Fontana to his aid; made roads; pruned the wild forest luxuriance into parks and gardens; formed stately terraces adorned with sculpture; and placed twelve chapels or stations round the house in the adjacent woods, which he peopled with statues of saints, gods,

and satyrs, a mixed but goodly company, looking over the tree-tops on pedestals some sixty feet high, and startling the sight in unexpected places. He also caused to be traced from the northern front of the villa a broad grassy alley (spanned midway by a triumphal arch, and further on by a theatre for *al fresco* performances), from whence, rising abruptly—always in a straight line and forming a vista from the villa—two hundred steps of stone, cut through the forest, form a *Scala Santa*, or sacred staircase, mounting to a high tower on the summit of the hill, where twelve monks, living in twelve cells, said prayers for his eminence and all his family, day and night.

When all was done, our cardinal called the place THE THEBAID, in memory of his lowly brethren, the starving monks of the Egyptian desert, who would mightily have enjoyed the change from arid sand, thirst, and hunger, to this refined and luxurious hermitage. Pope Alexander, out of the funds of St. Peter, left it also a noble revenue, along with many broad acres on Tuscan and on Roman soil, which have come down unlessened to the present day. The Thebaid is therefore maintained with fitting splendour by the Marquis Chigi, its present owner.

The saloons and galleries within are still decked with old frescoes, gilding, marbles, and statues, to which

are added the comforts of our own present time. A crowd of modern retainers, valets, keepers, stewards, gardeners, shepherds, come and go over the grassy court within the gates, where in the morning are often to be seen seated patiently on a certain stone bench, waiting to be served, whole families of beggars—poor yellow-faced wretches, who all receive a dole of bread and wine, according to ancient custom, in spite of the vigorous remonstrances and often violent interposition of Argo, the watch-dog, who is as large and as white as a polar bear.

The old Cardinal's Retreat has its ghost, of course. One evening we had been tempted by the wondrous beauty of the moonlight into the woods. The twisted ilex trunks looked down upon us like a fantastic multitude hovering in the deep shadows; above, the moon rose in an unclouded sky. We went on, and descended from the plateau into the Siena road, over-arched with black branches. On one side, a wall borders this road; on the other, where the ground falls rapidly and the road is terraced, there is not even a parapet, but a fall of some ten or fourteen feet. The night was very still. Nothing but the distant baying of a dog broke the silence. Suddenly a sound of wheels came on us, beginning very faintly—then ceasing—then coming on again. At last it grew loud and distinct,

and proved to be a *baroccino* (gig) returning late from Siena with some of our people — Antonio, butler; Adamo, keeper; and Filippo, gardener.

"Oh, *signori, signori!*" gasped Antonio, "we have just seen the *donnina;* there, just below, between the Satiro" [a great statue] "and this chapel here. We saw her as plainly as we see you, standing in the middle of the road, with her head bent."

"Yes," broke in Adamo, shaking himself as if waking out of a nightmare, "yes, indeed! *Santa Maria!* I was leading the horse—for the road is so rough, and the shadows are so dark—when I saw in the moonlight a woman with something over her head, like the peasant-women wear. She came out of this wall and glided across the road, close before me. She disappeared over the parapet among the woods. *Anima mia!* she was there beside me, for the horse saw her too, and so started and shied that he nearly threw the gig over the parapet."

"Indeed, *signori,*" said Antonio, "the gig jerked, and I was almost thrown out. I saw the *donnina* too."

"Yes, but not so plainly as I did," cried Adamo. "I tell you she passed close—close to my hand, under the horse's nose, with a cloth on her head and a spindle in her hand! She passed across the road over

that deep fall, which must have killed any mortal creature."

These two men had been soldiers, were no cowards, and were ready to face any mortal foe bravely. They were comforted with wine and sent to bed. We then sent for the head man—the *fattore*—to ask what it all meant.

It meant that from father to son, so long back that no one can tell where it began, it had been known among the peasants that these woods are haunted by a ghost in the shape of a woman of small stature, known as the *donnina*, who generally appears towards dusk, after the *Ave Maria*, at special spots, and usually in stormy weather. She had been often seen where the servants had seen her, in the wood on the road to Siena; also in a deep hollow or *borro*, the bed of a torrent, dry in summer, and blocked with masses of rock and rolling stones, brought down by the upper streams—an ugly, lonesome place, with exceedingly steep banks, overgrown with scanty shrubs.

She generally appears, we were told, in black, her head covered, her face bent down over a spindle, which she seems to turn as she moves. Nobody has ever seen her face. There is nothing terrific or horrible about her, save the fact that she is supernatural. She always glides slowly away, so slowly as to be distinctly seen

disappearing among rocks, or over walls, in the woods. Not a year passes that she is not seen several times, especially towards early winter.

We spoke with those to whom she has most frequently appeared. An old man, by name Currini, a mason, remembered that once, as he was returning home, he saw a woman whom he supposed, in the fading light, to be his daughter, sitting on the wall of a rough little bridge that crosses the stream in the *borro*, spinning. Her back was turned towards him. "*Ah, Teresa mia*, are you waiting for me?" he said, putting out his hand to touch her shoulder. The hand fell upon air; the figure rose (the back still turned towards him), slowly glided away down the steep bank of the *borro*, and vanished among the big rocks heaped up there. He has often seen the *donnina* since, but never has been conscious of feeling the horror he felt then.

Then we talked with a keeper called Carlo di Ginestreto, a fine Saxon-looking fellow, with honest round blue eyes and a shock of uncombed yellow hair. This Carlo has his home on the hill over the *borro*, and had seen the *donnina* among the trees there three months ago. "Once," he said, "I was coming from Siena along the road, and there had been a heavy fall of snow, and the moon was extremely clear, and every-

thing in the forest was as plain as day. I was coming along, thinking of a new gun I had seen in Siena, when I saw, standing in the middle of the road, the *donnina* as plain as I see your excellency now before me. She stood there till I was almost close to her. She wore a sort of light petticoat with colours on it, and had something all black, over it, on her head and shoulders. There I saw her, and I saw her shadow in the moonlight, too. She looked like a girl, though I did not see her face, and she went away, *piano, piano, piano,* as I stood still, and faded out among the trees. I never saw her so plainly, for the snow made all so clear. I often see her, *poverina!* I do not feel any fear. What harm could she do to me?" And he spread out his large chest, and lifted his long arms with that ejaculatory action common to Italians.

After Carlo came Celso, a respectable contadino living also on the estate in a vineyard close to the villa. He told us "that after he had come back from serving in the militia, he was standing one evening with his little brother in the road, near the Satiro, when he heard himself called distinctly three times, out of the wood, in a strange sad voice, '*Celso, Celso, Celso!*' His little brother said, 'Who calls you, Celso, in such a strange voice?' and he heard the same voice call him again when he was alone in the wood." He was

frightened, and liked it so little that he now never passed by that road in the evening, but went "round a mile or so, higher up on the hills."

We have more material mysterious personages going about the old Cardinal's Retreat, too, as will presently be seen; and we have incentives to strange fancies out of number.

On one side of the villa, adjoining the broad terrace leading to the *Scala Santa*, is a pleasure-ground or park, designed and specially set apart by the cardinal for meditation and repose. It may be some two or three miles round, and is enclosed by a high wall, and entered by three lofty gates. It is full of broad, moss-grown walks, with here and there statues of monks and angels, high on carved pedestals, in attitudes of prayer. The walks and narrower paths are all knit up at the further end by a chapel somewhat small and low, with kneeling statues on either hand, darkened and moss-grown by time and storm. The trees are the ilex of the surrounding forest, expanded into superb proportions by being so long undisturbed. The ground is rocky and undulating, covered with a graceful undergrowth of arbutus, holly, and laurustinus; every plant and every tree being evergreen. The big branches of the ilex-trees, with long silvery beards of delicate white moss hanging down

amidst the glittering waxy leaves, pointed like thorns, wave over the paths, and cast flickering shadows as the eager sun darts through the dark foliage. As the passing clouds come and go over the surface of the chapel, here and there a glint of sun calls out the dark outlines of the kneeling statues so vividly that at a distance, looking upon them through a screen of fluttering leaves, they seem to move under the changing light. This is, in truth, a very weird and ghostly spot, set apart, as it should seem, for unholy rites, altogether solemn and mystic!

Here, in the brief though ardent autumnal sunshine, impenetrable shade tempts one to wander among the rocks, and between the dark twisted ilex stems, all speckled and flecked with patches of black and white mosses, like the breast of a bird; or to rest on a carpet of moss, and hear the ripe acorns drop from the evergreen oaks among the dry leaves; or to listen to the busy twitter of the departing birds arranging their winter flight, as they circle round and round, pecking the ripe arbutus berries. Here, too, come the bees of the year, gathering honey from the scented herbs. It is a rare place in which to watch the last pale butterflies hovering among the aromatic flowers of the cyclamen and caper which grow in the crevices of the rocks; and the

little green lizards racing over the stones, or lurking immovable in some sunny corner, watching for the harmless wood-snake which still creeps out to enjoy the mid-day warmth. As day declines in this strange and beautiful wood, the gathering clouds put out one by one the bright lights on rock and leaf and stem; and a gloom gathering around, and a silence of all those inarticulate utterances that people woods with life, tell of darkness and approaching night.

One day, sitting in the thickest tangle, near where the hill abruptly descends towards the Siena road and the statue of the Satiro, we heard a low whistle—then another whistle answered in an opposite direction —then the sound of many feet crushing the leaves, and of the branches a-flapping as of men passing through them. We promptly made for the house, where the polar bear was aloft on a wall barking furiously, and some serving-men were standing in the court around a group of five rough fellows, each carrying a long gun. One of these, a fair-complexioned youth, rather hump-backed, of about twenty, was armed also with a short sword. This fellow, the spokesman, had walked in, followed by his band, and desired to see the master; for he wanted money. When told that the master was out, he asked for the *fattore*, and still for money.

The *fattore* also being invisible, he demanded wine and bread. Gathering up the fragments given him, he and his band all took their departure up the *Scala Santa*.

This intrusion was followed by all sorts of reports. There was a band of six men on the hills over the villa, above the hermitage, their chief, a young man called Campanello, hump-backed, and about twenty-three years old, a deserter. They had guns and revolvers. They had gone to the residence of an old priest, and when he sent out word to them that he could give them no money, had fired on the house. A peasant, passing at the break of day to his work in the hills, had found a large fire burning, and, sitting down to warm himself, received a blow on his head from a stone hurled at him out of the trees. Other stories came in, telling how the same band had appeared nearer Siena, twenty-five in number, disguised in black and red masks; had waylaid and robbed people returning from the city market; had bound them to trees, and so left them. Another story told how a certain Bindi had found his villa entirely surrounded one evening, and how he had ransomed himself for five hundred francs. Later came the gendarmes in good earnest, who were refreshed with wine and meat, and then dispersed themselves in the woods to hunt for Campanello.

One evening, just at dinner-time, a peasant appeared, looking very scared, in the court before the villa, holding in his hand a piece of raw meat. So many peasants came and went with such strange burdens of comestibles for the *chef*, that this excited no surprise, until the man with the raw meat made his way to an open gallery enclosed by a lofty iron *grille*, by which the great hall is entered. Here he stopped, and accosting one of the servants, said he had a message to the Marquis Chigi, which he must deliver personally. We were all in the hall waiting for the dinner-bell, and came out. There stood the trembling peasant, holding his raw meat, which with a low obeisance he presented to the marquis. In a slit in the meat was a dirty little letter to the effect "that Campanello demanded five hundred francs to be placed that night, after the moon had set, under the stone beneath the crucifix in the grove of cypresses in the middle of the forest; and that if the *padrone* did not comply with Campanello's demand, he and his might confess to the family priest, and consider themselves dead." The peasant, being asked why he had made himself the bearer of such a threat, replied, "That Campanello and his band had surrounded his cottage, and that he had shut himself up for some time; but, being obliged to feed the beasts, had at last gone out. That he still found the brigands

there, revolver in hand, and gun on shoulder; and Campanello was armed with a short sword. That Campanello had threatened to shoot him, and to hamstring his oxen, if he did not carry the letter." But it was shrewdly suspected that he had more dealings with the band than he cared to own.

The matter duly considered, it was resolved to give the men twenty francs, which were duly placed under the stone beneath the crucifix in the grove of cypresses, in the middle of the forest, at ten o'clock that same night. Some of our party proposed the three gendarmes and an ambush; but as Campanello's men were desperadoes, and as an honest man may be picked off from behind a tree as well as another, and as we were hemmed in on all sides by trees, it was deemed prudent to do without the gendarmes and the ambush.

Now, it is to be remembered that these men—still roving up and down our hills under cover of the evergreen woods now before my eyes as I write—are fed, and clothed, and do not generally sleep out of a bed. Therefore it is pretty clear that if the peasants living here and there, on redeemed fields of corn and olive, on the sunny sides of the slopes, spoke out, the brigands would be soon caught. But your Tuscan peasant is the veriest coward living. He trembles before any Campanello whom he meets; he

lodges him, and feeds him, and conceals him, and would swear his face black and blue before he would betray him. It is fair to the poor fellow to bear in mind that, if he did otherwise, some members of the band, or some other members of some other bands acting on oral instruction, would then and there mark him, as a hunter does a stag; would scent him out and shoot him (and perhaps his children) from behind a convenient tree; fire his house, and strew ashes on his hearth-stone. This in spite of the magnificent defence offered by Government, in the shape of three gendarmes, attired in a brilliant uniform of white, yellow, and blue, with cocked hats as big as Dr. Syntax wore when he went out searching for the picturesque—announcing them at least a mile off, in fine contrast to the emerald mantle of the woods—over a district forty miles in extent. Such facts will not be found chronicled in local newspapers; neither will they be admitted in the clubs of Florence nor other large cities, where it is convenient to believe pleasant things only; but they are true none the less, and *we*, who receive polite correspondence in raw meat in the old Cardinal's Retreat, well know them to be true.

Great news has just come in. Campanello was taken last night. He was living at free quarters on an unfortunate peasant on the very summit of the topmost heights,

over the Romitorio, looking towards Volterra. But, in this case, love was stronger than fear of vengeance. He had deeply incensed a youth who was in love with one of the peasant's daughters by paying his court to her, and by offering her some trinkets supposed to have been stolen, which she wore. This youth, by name Oreste, went in his fury straight to a town called Rosìa, and informed our friends, the three gendarmes who live there, where Campanello was to be found, and promised to conceal them until he could be taken. In the meantime, poor Campanello, led away by the same fatal passion of love, lent himself blindly to his pursuer's devices. That very evening there was a dance given at a neighbouring cottage. Thither went Campanello in pursuit of his fair one, unarmed, even leaving his little sword in the house where he slept. In the middle of the dance, however, he caught sight of our brilliant friends, conspicuous in their war-paint, as they naturally would be, and, escaping by a back entrance, rushed off in flight. But Fate again met him in the shape of the injured lover, Oreste, who was watching outside. He sprang upon him; tied him up until the gendarmes arrived; secured him; and, already scenting the sweet savour of a Government reward for the capture of a *capo brigante* and a deserter, triumphantly led him off to prison.

XIII.

Start from Siena; Monte Varchi; Mr. B.—Brigands; Arezzo—Cortona; Lake of Thrasymene; Perugia.

I HAD gone by rail from Siena to Orvieto, when a sudden fancy seized me to visit Arezzo and Perugia by road, and a relative (Mr. B———) offered to accompany me.

Behold us, then, rising with the sun one fine morning early in October, and consigning ourselves to a lumbering vehicle, furnished with unlimited appliances for luggage, and drawn by four invalid horses, jingling with bells and wearing a certain species of fur night-cap, without which it is considered unorthodox to travel. The morning mists hung about the summits of the mountains, partially concealing the domes and campanile of the city, and partially revealing the rich olive gardens, pastures, and luxuriant vineyards along the road. The Chianti Hills and the higher ridge of Apennines were continually in view, each dent and crevice and water-course on their rugged sides marked with deep lines of shadow.

We were to strike the Arezzo road at Monte Varchi, where we had arranged to rest. My companion—a stern, hard man—was somewhat of a character. He was possessed by two ideas, viz., that Italy, including Rome, was on the eve of a republic; and that the Italians were, to a man, about to renounce Catholicism, expel the Pope, and massacre the priests. These and other equally startling facts, learnt from Mazzini, who was his intimate friend during his exile in London, Mr. B—— imparted to me in a solemn voice many times every day. The object of his present visit to Italy was to witness these marvellous events, and, if it were possible, to discover any locality where *the meat* was tolerable. If he did not succeed, he intended to return to London immediately. With Siena he was utterly disgusted; but having heard that the rich Umbrian plains furnished a good market at Perugia, he begged to accompany me thither.

It was market day at Monte Varchi, and the miserable wayside *osteria* was in indescribable confusion. House and stables were all in one, only the bipeds had the first story and the quadrupeds the *terreno* (ground-floor). Somehow or other we were continually turning up, however, into the stable, where upwards of two hundred horses were munching their oats.

"I wish I was a horse," said Mr. B——; "I could

travel then. Oats are generally good everywhere; but the vicissitudes of diet to which my system is exposed in this unhappy country, caused by the contrasts and admixture of butchers' meat . . . ."

The arrival of a travelling carriage fortunately interrupted Mr. B——; it was only, however, a reprieve.

Out of the carriage tumbled six ladies of various ages, attended by a fat courier in a fine Polish jacket decorated with fur. He gave himself such airs that, in the absence of any other male, I took him for the papa, until I saw him run into the kitchen with a struggling fowl in his hand. The ladies could speak neither French nor Italian, and therefore depended entirely on the courier. They kept their eyes bent steadily on the ground, and looked as though they had come to Italy for a penance. There was a common *sala* into which we were all crammed, together with some local potentates—*fattori* (stewards) and *mercanti di campagna*, rough fellows, smelling of tobacco and garlic—by an unscrupulous *padrona*, who, reasoning upon the principle of equality and fraternity established below among the horses, treated us accordingly. The English family were so overcome by their feelings that, escorted by the courier in the furred jacket, they retreated into a bedroom.

Mr. B—— grimly smiled. "The day is at hand,"

said he, waving his hand majestically towards the retreating ladies, "when these fictitious distinctions will cease—in Italy at least, where the republic is about to be proclaimed." As Mr. B——, seated in an old arm-chair, was evidently preparing for an oration, I escaped below among the horses.

Here stood knots of carmen and drivers in blue cotton jackets — rough, brutish fellows, who never speak without tremendous oaths. Here, too, was the kitchen, where the cook was frantically cutting and cooking cutlets, brought in by a ragged, barefooted child, who seemed to live on the run between the butcher's and the kitchen.

At last we were served in a scrambling way at separate tables, and, because our dinner was brought up first, an eternal enmity was awakened in the breasts of the English ladies and their fat courier—an enmity from which we suffered all the way to Perugia.

After two weary hours we started down the one crowded street of Monte Varchi, where it would have been easy to walk on the people's heads. We crossed a fertile plain bordered by low hills, ploughed to the steepest summit by pretty milk-white oxen with crimson housings. Fine single oak-trees were scattered here and there, soon melting into a tangled wood, excellent for concealment; therefore very alarming to me,

as suggestive of brigands. I confess I would gladly have proceeded at a much more rapid pace than our wretched team could accomplish. These forests near Arezzo have always been, and are still, a favourite haunt of banditti; and although the organised bands have long been exterminated by the Government, alarming isolated cases of plunder and violence occur every year. We came to a clearing in some oaks, just like a landscape by Salvator Rosa. It was a natural amphitheatre formed in what had once been an old gravel-pit, half a mile, perhaps, in circumference. The sides were high and rugged—wild, goblin trees overhung the edges, and stretched out their scathed branches over banks indented with dark holes and narrow openings, admirably adapted for concealment. A long stone bridge occupied the bottom of this pass, the road ascending on the opposite side. This ill-looking locality was called Palazzaccio, and was once infested by the notorious brigand Spadolino. This Spadolino was a sort of hero in his way, affecting to rob the rich in order to assist the poor; and so gaining no end of partisans among the peasants, who are always, as I have said, too ready to wink at this kind of thing.

The story goes that there was once a certain miller, called Giacomo, who had long kneaded his loaves in peace, with a large family rising around him, until bad

times came. Starvation threatened him, he could not pay his rent, and he was to be turned out of the mill he had long looked on as his home. Giacomo, in despair, sought the deep recesses of this very wood, wandering up and down its park-like glades, until at last, throwing himself on his face on the grass, he burst out into cries and groans with true Italian *furore*. Chance had led him into the immediate haunt of Spadolino, who, hearing a noise, appeared suddenly, as a brigand always should.

The miller, having nothing to lose, was bold with the courage of utter poverty. He looked up, weeping and wringing his hands, though Spadolino stood before him armed to the teeth, and carrying his gun in his hand.

"*Che roba e questa?*" quoth Spadolino; "and, *mille diavoli*, why are you making such a noise in my wood?"

"*Ahimè!*" cried the miller, "I care neither for you nor for the devil, whom you may be, for aught I know. I am ruined and undone, unless by this time to-morrow, when the *fattore* returns, I can produce ninety *francesconi* to pay my rent. Let the blessed Virgin help me if I have a single *quattrino!* I shall be turned out into the wood, and my poor *bambini* will starve!" And with that he buried

his face again in his hands, and roared louder than before.

"Do you know me?" said Spadolino, grasping him by the arm.

"No," replied the miller; "but I guess you are a brigand by your dress. *Cosa mi fa ?*"

Spadolino—still holding him by the arm—looked him straight in the face. "*Cospetto !* if you knew me, you would be glad to see me; for I can help you. Yes, *amico mio,* I can help you, if you ask me. I am Spadolino, who never yet refused a poor man in distress. You shall have the money; my hand on it."

"*Jesù Maria !*" cried Giacomo, jumping up and seizing the brigand's iron fist, "is this true? Are you Spadolino? Oh, angel of Providence! oh, saviour of my children! *Grazie, grazie !*" and down he fell on his knees, and kissed Spadolino's feet.

"Well," said the latter, "I am glad you have left off howling. Give yourself no thought. You have seen me—you have my word. Go home, and drink my health in water, if you have no wine—drink to Spadolino, the friend of the poor, and the terror of the rich. I may not be able to help you again, for the *sbirri* are close upon me; and I have dreamed too often lately of the domes of Florence—a bad sign, for I shall never see them again until my time is come."

That evening a carriage was stopped crossing this very bridge at the bottom of this very pass, and a rich booty secured. Spadolino, as cruel to the rich as he was merciful to the poor, deliberately cut the throats of the men it contained, and left the women in the road mourning over their corpses. Women, he told his band, were no subjects for him, and he would neither injure nor insult them, nor carry them into the wood, as the younger among that amiable brotherhood suggested. As soon as the earliest streaks of morning tinged the neighbouring Apennines, the miller returned to the spot where they had met the previous night, and there he found Spadolino somewhat pale and anxious, but holding in his hand the promised money tied up in a bag.

"Here," said he, "is the gold. Let one man, at least, bless me, though my hands be bloody."

The miller shuddered, as he saw that so indeed they were; but, without asking inconvenient questions, he clutched the bag, earnestly thanking him as the saviour of his fortunes.

"Ay, you may thank me," said Spadolino gloomily, "for this night's work shall be my last. If I can escape into the Romagna, I will never draw knife again in Tuscany. The spies are too close upon me. Go, *amico mio*, carry this money home; and when the *fattore*

comes to turn you out of your mill, throw it into his face, and let him feel 'tis genuine."

The miller faithfully followed his advice, and by mid-day felt doubly gratified by having paid his rent and insulted the *fattore*. But poor Spadolino had run his race. This last robbery and murder had been hurried and ill-combined. When the gendarmes arrived on the spot, they traced the band into the recesses of the forest. Spadolino was taken, and soon afterwards hung at the Porta Santa Croce at Florence, to the infinite sorrow of the grateful miller, who, however, held his tongue most determinedly as to his own share in this catastrophe.

We are still wandering in the romantic forest which covers the district.

Not a house is visible. To the left lie the deep blue Apennines in heavy lines, like a background by Tintoretto. The shades of evening are gathering around. No wonder that our talk is of brigands as the carriage lazily pursues its way.

Mr. B—— remembered to have seen Gasparone (the great *capo brigante*, who was known and dreaded all over Italy) some years ago at Cività Vecchia, after his surrender. He was allowed to walk up and down some particular wall or bastion, from

whence he was visible, and people went in flocks to gaze on him. He hated the priests, too, like a true Italian, and with good cause, for the treacherous trick played on him to induce his voluntary surrender—a true specimen of the Punic faith in vogue among these black-robed gentry, and in perfect accordance with the priestly motto, that the end justifies the means. Gasparone, who, perhaps, was the most finished specimen of a brigand that ever lived, had long exercised his trade unmolested, and quietly robbed, plundered, and murdered quite *à fantaisie* in the Campagna, where his name was much more feared than the Pope's. He had somewhere or other a cavern which extended five miles underground like a catacomb; and, when the unhappy soldiers were sent out against him, they were shot down by dozens—out of the trees, as it seemed, for no living mortal could be seen. All hope of capturing him by fair means was abandoned, when the priests at last bethought them of a stratagem, which one of their number undertook to put into execution.

This priest—who, by the way, must have had immense moral courage—was a sickly, thin ascetic, with want stamped on every feature of his starved countenance. He set out from Rome; discovered one of the entrances into the famous, or rather infamous, cavern; and, without more ado, walked boldly in.

When he made his appearance, the bandits were so utterly taken aback by his temerity that they forgot to shoot him. They then became curious to know what madman could thus have ventured voluntarily into their lair. The entire band—two hundred in number—gathered round him, their murderous faces lit up by the glare of the torches, which burnt continually in this subterranean garrison. There was a sound of blood in the wild yell with which they demanded what he wanted, at the same time jangling their knives and stilettoes in an ominous chorus. But the priest stood firm.

"I want," said he, "to know if a brigand chief called Gasparone is to be found here?"

There was a devilish chuckle in reply, which expressed Yes! And the fearful crowd pressed still closer round the priest.

"What do you want with Gasparone?" at last said one of the band.

"I come," replied the priest, "with a message to him from the Holy Father." And at his name he uncovered and crossed himself as coolly as if he saw the Pope in a holiday procession at St. Peter's. "But this message," resumed he, "I must deliver to himself alone; therefore I am come to see your chief, whom people call Gasparone."

The bandits were astonished, and almost respected the thin, helpless priest for his courage. The crowd fell off; the stilettoes no longer rattled; and the men formed into small groups, seeming to discuss among themselves whether or not they should lead him to Gasparone. At last one of the number disappeared.

When Gasparone, keeping his savage state in his own peculiar den, heard that a priest wanted to see him, he burst into a peal of savage laughter that made the long galleries echo again. Then he swore a horrid oath, and bade his followers bring the visitor into his presence. "What, *diavolo*," cried he, "does the madman mean, that he comes here to run his head into the noose? Is he weary of his convent life, and wants me to shorten it? *Cospetto*, I will soon do his business, if that be all! But in with the *canaglia;* let me hear what he brings from our brother the Pope."

The priest appeared, and in a tone of perfect composure repeated his errand.

"I come," said he, "with a message of mercy from the Holy Father; and to tell you that which, did I not come, you could never know in these deep caverns, though it is on all men's tongues."

"But," cried Gasparone, "we come up to the daylight sometimes, though, as the Pope well knows, for bravely

have we plucked many a fat *monsignore*. What, then, is this message we do not know?"

"It is an offer of pardon—entire pardon to you and every bandit who surrenders within three days from this time. No conditions are affixed; the Holy Father seeks only the souls of sinners. This decree is hung up on every cross, and in the four ways along the great roads. But how were you to know this down below? The three days would have expired—mercy would have no longer been offered—therefore I am come to bring you pardon and peace."

Gasparone frowned, and was silent. For awhile he seemed to weigh what the priest said, and eyed him askance, as if to detect any treachery. But the man of black stood unmoved, his hands folded on his breast.

"What assurance," at last said Gasparone, "have I for the sincerity of this offer? How am I to know it is not all an infernal trick?"

"It is a Papal ordinance, signed and sealed in due form, as all may see, and as you may assure yourself. During the next three days there is a truce, and even you, Gasparone, and your band, may walk at large. You can judge for yourself if I am not speaking the truth."

"We will see," moodily replied the chief. He waved

his hand, the priest withdrew, and passed out through the long passages by which he had entered.

Gasparone, relying on the word of the messenger, during the stated truce did personally satisfy himself as to the truth of the statement. The ordinance, drawn up with every formality, and bearing the impress of the Papal arms, was hung on every column and cross of the great thoroughfares. On the third day, Gasparone and his band of two hundred surrendered formally to the magistrates. It was a great sight to see these ferocious men, redolent of murders, dripping as it were with blood, come with their arms in their hands, and retire shorn of all their strength, like Samson of his locks, and helpless as he.

But oh, incredible extent of priestly treachery! No sooner were the wretched men disarmed than they were seized by the Papal troops, and imprisoned. No excuse was given, no Jesuitry attempted for this vile breach of faith. Gasparone was locked up in the Castel Sant' Angelo, afterwards to be transferred to the prison at Cività Vecchia, where Mr. B—— had, as I said, seen him. The brigand yet lives, I believe, but has been sent to Corsica, that *alma mater* of all Italian *vauriens*. The priest—the instrument in this vile transaction—was at once shipped off to Florence, out of the way of the revengeful stilettoes of the Romans.

Had he remained on their side the Apennines he was a dead man.

But while we are prosing about bandits and murders the forest has ended. We are in the plain, and on a rocky ridge opposite appears Arezzo (where we are to pass the night) encircled by walls, and backed by the stern Apennines, all bare and treeless, and now darkening into night.

On arriving, we were ushered into the same Italian inn that somehow meets us everywhere, whether in the far recesses of Venetian Lombardy, or in the uttermost parts of the Romagna. It is always an old *palazzo* which has seen better days, and wears a proud, disdainful look, as if resenting the indignity put upon it by transforming it into a *caravanserai*. The lower range of windows is always closely barred like a prison. There is a great open door, and an enormous staircase, broad enough for a parish to mount abreast, generally rather dirty. On arriving at the top, corridors open in all directions, cold and bare, with great windows looking into unknown back premises, where the *vetturino* drivers live and swear, amid a strong odour of horses and garlic. The cameriere, *alias* waiter, always ushers us into a large room, with two or three small iron bedsteads, no carpet, very little furniture, and an over-allowance of doors, which, being

open, present long perspectives of bedrooms precisely similar. These doors he carefully closes and locks, leaving us finally to our fate, with one tallow candle and no snuffers, so that we feel very miserable. Dinner is promised at once—*subito momento*—and this prospect warms us for half an hour; but the *subito* of an Italian may be put, Anglicè, into the word "*never.*" We wait, and wait. An hour has elapsed, and no dinner is forthcoming. At last Mr. B—— proposes ringing, but alas! there is no bell; so I rush wildly out, and adventuring rashly into the labyrinth of corridors, get lost; but meeting with a servant, expostulate, am shown the dining-room (a very back room indeed), and delicately and politely told that as the *vetturino* pays for everything ("*pensa a lei*" is the phrase—don't I know it, ill-luck to it!), they cannot put themselves out of the way for a private family, who may be plucked *ad libitum.* All this is expressed quite politely by a gentlemanly young man with a well-kept moustache, who, on your earnest supplication—now grown into a downright complaint—still promises the dinner *subito.* At this point our rage is raised to the highest pitch by a report from my maid, that through an open door she has seen the English family dining most comfortably amid floods of light, and waited on with great state by the courier in

the Polish jacket. This is absolutely maddening, and we feel it so; particularly Mr. B——, who, cold and hungry as he is, looks sterner than ever, walks about the room, and talks to himself. At last, after two hours' expectation, dinner is announced. We make a kind of rush, like hungry wolves; for, after all, the animal passions are the foundation of our nature, and will *out* sometimes! The very back room is now decorated with more tallow candles, and the presence of two most genteel young gentlemen, who take off the tureen cover with a flourish. There is the same discoloured hot water with vermicelli swimming about in it, which we have had ever since we arrived in Italy, and which follows us along with the inn wherever we stop. There, too, is the wine, which, being admirable vinegar, Mr. B—— rejects with a fierce glance at the waiter, and a horrid grimace. After the soup comes a *frittura* of artichokes, lambs' brains, and combs of cocks; then a horrid lump of indigestible, sodden-looking beef without any gravy, and some chickens which certainly had been enjoying life at Arezzo until a very late hour in the afternoon. A diminutive pudding, with some apples and chestnuts, ends the repast, and we are left to our gloomy reflections. Mr. B—— is excessively discontented.

"I cannot really," says he, "stand this kind of

treatment; it is dreadful to be in a country where there is no meat. I cannot live without good meat, and therefore I cannot remain in Italy."

I suggest the meat at Siena being tolerable.

"I regret to say," he replies solemnly, "that I did not find it so. I am half starved, for since I have been in Italy I cannot eat. If the meat is not good at Rome, I shall not remain there a week, and I much doubt it."

"At such a place as Rome I could, I think, live on leather," said I.

"Pardon me, you would do extremely wrong to think of such a monstrosity. When Italy is revolutionised, and the real productiveness of the soil belongs to the people generally, there will be good meat, and I shall probably return. The revolution must inevitably take place in about——"

Knowing his one idea, and suffering intensely from it, I got up a tremendous fit of coughing and withdrew, leaving Mr. B—— in the midst of a grand oration about Mazzini. Gladly did I retreat to the small iron bedstead, which, having no head-board or bolster, was difficult to lie in, as the pillow would always tumble down backwards. But I got expert at last, and went to sleep, resolving to see a little of Arezzo in the morning.

In the morning I rose before it was light. All was dim and grey in the Strada Maestra, whose upper portion is so steep that a carriage could by no means be dragged up. The town hangs, as it were, on the side of a mountain. To my right I noticed a fine Gothic church, with rows of delicate open arcades mounting tier above tier on the façade. This was Santa Maria della Pieve, said to have been once a temple of Bacchus. I hurried up the hill, and yonder on the summit rose the Duomo, but alas! like all its fellows in Tuscany, with an unfinished façade. The interior, though not large, is grandly impressive —a small pattern of that glorious pile at Milan. There was just light enough to disclose the great stone pillars of the aisles supporting pointed arches, rising out of deep masses of shadow. In the choir some splendid stained glass, in lancet windows, flung back the sun's first rays, in blue and crimson, on the pavement. I love the solemn grandeur of these Gothic churches, where the pure stone, unadorned by painting or gilding, rises in pillared simplicity to the fretted roof, all pure and virginal as a maiden dedicated to Heaven. This building was to me full of devotion. At one splendid altar, divided from the body of the church by portals of gilt bronze, the lights were still burning, their waning flames paling in the

morning sun. I had no time to study monuments, pictures, or statues, but I took in the gloomy magnificence of the whole, and was satisfied. Beside the church, which stands high above the city, there is a large square, laid out in avenues of trees as a public promenade; it reminded me of the pretty Lizza at Siena, only there are no statues or monuments here. Indeed, the situation of Arezzo is very similar to Siena: there is the same splendid panoramic view from the walls of the surrounding Apennines, and the same fruity valleys at their feet, diversified with villas and villages, gardens and olive woods. Only the situation of Arezzo is incomparably the finest, the mountains being far grander and more rugged than those which encircle Siena.

As I descended from the square I saw the house where Petrarch was born. It is very small, containing only a door and three small windows. But one could not be sentimental, for the place had freshly been painted and whitewashed, and looked provokingly modern. Next door, too, was a barrack, where the soldiers were already practising the drum, so I fairly ran away. The air of Arezzo—supposed to be very favourable to talent since Petrarch, Vasari, and other geniuses were born here—was exceedingly nipping at this early hour of an October

morning. Michel Angelo declares, modestly, IF he had any talent it was owing to his birth in the neighbourhood, near enough to breathe "*la sottilità dell' aria d'Arezzo;*" and I declare, if the keenness of the atmosphere was meant, I do not wonder that some extraordinary effect was produced.

Near the Duomo, on the slope of the hill, is the *Gran Piazza,* ornamented by a row of houses designed by Vasari. The guide-books praise the architectural beauties of these *Loggie,* as they are called, but I could see little in them to admire. There is a pretty old fountain, round which the old Italian crones were already gossiping and washing vegetables. Before leaving Arezzo, which was one of the twelve Etruscan cities, I must make honourable mention of its wine, a fine, sweet sherry, light in quality, but as agreeable a beverage as a traveller could desire to refresh himself withal.

The road to Cortona from Arezzo, as well as the railroad, skirts the base of the mountain-chain on which both cities stand. To the right is the fertile plain of Chiana, the richest, perhaps, of the many rich agricultural districts of Italy, extending on a dead level for upwards of thirty miles, shut in by pale outlines of distant mountains. The entire drive to our mid-day resting-place at Camuscìa was delightful. I

must say I wish heartily there was no such place as Camuscìa, which, being situated on the low ground, gives the *vetturini* an excuse for not ascending the mountain, where Cortona fronts the luxuriant plain. This, the most ancient of the twelve Etruscan cities, looks in the distance quite Moresque, with its domes, spires, and turrets, all of a fine brown tint, standing out in high relief against the brilliant sky. I looked at the place with a mysterious feeling of reverence when I remembered that tradition assigns it an almost fabulous antiquity, and that those frowning walls are supposed to have been built by the Pelasgi before the siege of Troy!

But alas! common life will assert its power in the most solemn spots. We are hungry and thirsty in the ruins of Pompeii; take lunch, drink champagne, and talk scandal in the catacombs; and dally on the brink of Etna. *Telle est la vie.* While I was contemplating Cortona out of the windows of the inn, my reverie was broken by the approach of Mr. B——, evidently in a high state of excitement.

"Upon my word," said he, "the conduct of those English people in the *vetturino* in front is infamous. I never saw more gross rudeness in my life. They always, of course, arrive before us, and then make a rush to secure the best rooms. One

would think their lives depended on it. Deuced ill-bred, to be sure. I wish they had not, like us, preferred the road to the rail. Why is it," continued he, in his grave way, "that English people are invariably so rude, exclusive, and selfish, and unlike any other nation? One may meet people of the first quality—French, Germans, Russians, or Italians—and always experience the very refinement of unselfish good breeding; while every wretched clerk with fifty pounds in his pocket for a fortnight's tour, every boorish cotton lord, who never in his life found himself in decent society, thinks himself justified in the most preposterous pretension. I could kick the fellows. I am ashamed of my countrymen abroad. I always say I am an American—*they* never behave so."

I laughed at his vehemence.

"Here we are to wait for our lunch until these people have done, just as at Arezzo. Why could we not have sat down together, and so availed ourselves *en masse* of the wretched accommodation of this wayside inn? Ah! when the republic is proclaimed in Italy—when she rises in glorious revolution, and drives out those who now oppress her—royal tyrants, emasculate nobles, abandoned priests—when rivers of blood have been shed, and all men are made equal—then, and

then only, will one be able to travel without being made the object of these degrading insults."*

I endeavoured to calm him, but his mouth was effectually stopped by the entrance of luncheon. With a stern and disdainful air (for he was silent now, having had out his oration), he discussed the tough cutlets before us. When we left Camuscìa, I think we were both in a bad humour.

The next stage is Castiglione Fiorentino, a small but ancient town, on a hill commanding a magnificent view over the immense Val de Chiana and the distant mountains beyond Perugia.

We were now approaching the Lake of Thrasymene —the scene of that awful battle which so nearly decided the fate of Rome. Thrasymene!—how the name took me back to childhood and its happy hours—to dull Roman histories, stern governesses, and Mangnall's Questions! In those days of early study (the calmest and happiest of a woman's life certainly), that famous battle had always particularly interested me. The fatal foolhardiness of Flaminius, in despising the hero to whom he was opposed, angered me; I almost rejoiced in his doom. I never could forgive Hannibal's want of decision in not then and there

* Such language is not exaggerated. These are the sentiments of the *Reds* all over Europe.

marching to the walls of Rome, and defeating the arrogant Romans.

As we advanced, the country assumed a more southern aspect; the hedges were formed of large myrtles and pomegranates, and here and there a great cactus forced its deformed branches upward to the sun's warm rays. We mounted a little rise, turned the corner of a hill, and there was the beautiful lake, thirty miles in length, spread out before us. I never beheld a lovelier view. One discusses the comparative beauty of the Swiss lakes, of Como, Maggiore, and Garda, while this enchanting inland sea is comparatively unknown.

As the carriage descended to a level with the water, we entered vast woods of ancient oak-trees fringing the shores in groves and *bosquets* of wondrous beauty. Above rose the hills where Hannibal and his host lay encamped, and behind which his reserve was concealed; while the present road, as well as the railroad, follows the margin of the water, along the low ground on which the Romans advanced.

The shores are solitary, but exquisitely soft and lovely; and as we drove mile after mile along the shore through park-like woods, I thought I had never beheld a fairer scene of Italian landscape. Two rocky islands appear, breaking the uniformity, as we

near Passignano and its railway station—a most picturesquely situated town, close to the water.

On we went along the margin of the lake, through beautiful woods of majestic oak and old olive-trees. The weather was lovely, warm, and genial as an English July day. Not a sound disturbed the harmony of the scene—the perfumed breeze swept by without a rustle—all was peace. By-and-by the road turns off from the shores at Torricella, and becomes a mountain road embowered in the same oak woods. It was so steep that oxen were necessary to drag up our heavy carriage, so we all got out to walk. Mr. B——, under the influence of the fine scenery, grew rabid about the present condition of such a noble country, and the absolute necessity for a republic. If he had been requested at that moment to head the advancing column against the walls of Rome, I think he would have accepted with enthusiasm. His tall figure rose to its utmost height, and his stern countenance was lit by a sinister glow. His hard features, quivering under the influence of internal agitation, gave him the air of an ancient Roman; and he only wanted the toga to transform him into a veritable republican. I spare my readers the oration he made going up that steep hill (how he had breath for it, I don't know); the conclusion of it was, that that very night he should write to

Mazzini, from Perugia, and implore him no longer to delay the liberation of prostrate Italy.

From the summit of the mountain there is a magnificent view. In front stands an ancient castellated tower on a hillock of turf; below, two broad valleys open out right and left, each divided and broken with ranges of mountains stern and wild, extending south in long hard lines, the invariable character of Roman scenery. Here and there feudal castles frown down from rocky heights, reminding one of the days of *condottieri* and French invasions; while a few villages peep out from among the oak woods which cover all the low ground and the lower spurs of the mountain. Straight ahead appears the road to Perugia, cutting through the valley. The sun was setting in a perfect sea of purple and gold, shooting forth long streaks of dazzling light athwart the valleys. It was a glorious scene, and reminded me of a certain landscape I remember by Domenichino, who so well understood the rich Italian tints. By-and-by, darkness gathered rapidly over the west, the moon came out pure and bright, and, beside her, two brilliant stars that sparkled in the dark heavens.

The road now wound round the base of hills for some time, through very "brigand"-looking woods, all the deeper in shade and mystery from the lateness of the hour. I began to finger the extra napoleons in my

purse rather nervously, my fears not being diminished by the exhortations of the *vetturino* to keep a sharp look-out behind for fear the boxes should be cut off the carriage. At last Perugia came in sight, grandly throned on the summit of a rock, which rises abruptly from the plain. I forgot my fears in admiration of its size and splendid position, and the stupendous Etruscan walls that gird its sides, on the very edge of the cliffs. Oxen were again necessary to drag us up to the city, which we entered through a massive gateway, formed of blocks of stone, only to be removed by Titans. A kind of boulevard conducts from the gates into the streets, planted with trees. The darkness only allowed one to guess a view beyond. Strange that so elevated a spot should have suffered severely from the plague during the middle ages, which repeatedly visited this city, and reckoned the great painter, Pietro Perugino, among its victims.

We drew up at the hotel (said to be one of the best in Italy), anticipating, with no small satisfaction, the excellent accommodation awaiting us. On the walls of the hall, and along the staircase, are inscribed the names of all the sovereigns, popes, cardinals, princes, and nobles who had slept there.

I was ushered into a most superb bedroom, evidently the state apartment reserved for kings and

princes. The walls were lined with crimson damask and gold, the doors were gilt also, and painted in arabesques; and the bed—oh, how shall I describe that bed?—it was big enough for a whole generation. One disappeared among great festoons and folds of deep red velvet upheld by an immense gold cornice. A small door opened close by into a dressing-closet, with an iron bedstead, which I desired to have prepared for me. Somehow I felt certain that grand room was haunted, and would not have slept there for all the world.

XIV.

Perugia—Churches—Tomb—Santa Maria degli Angeli—St. Francis —Assisi—Foligno.

PERUGIA is a wonderful old place. Scarcely one street is level, and all the houses look as if not a brick had been touched since the Cæsars. It is the most consistently ancient city I ever saw. The very latest fashions date back three hundred years; and one feels quite relieved while contemplating something light in the Gothic palaces, after seeing the stupendous antiquity of the Etruscan walls, which certainly must have been raised by the Titans themselves long before their disgrace, somewhere in the time of Deucalion or Nox.

I proceeded from the hotel into the grand piazza, where stands the Duomo, a bold pile of Gothic splendour, raised majestically on a flight of marble steps. In the centre of the piazza is a beautiful marble fountain of exquisite workmanship, whence a perfect river gushes forth, splashing into a spacious basin beneath. Opposite is the Palazzo Comunale—

a huge double-fronted Gothic pile, partly standing in the piazza, and partly in the great street that opens from it. Here is an abundance of all the elaborate tracery and luxuriant fancy of that picturesque age. Heavily-groined arched windows, solid, yet graceful, occupy the grand story; while below, a vast portal, profusely ornamented with every detail of mediæval grotesqueness, opens into gloomy halls and staircases. At the far end of the piazza there is a dark archway, and a descending flight of steps going heaven knows where —down to unknown depths in the lower town. What a brave old square it is! Not a stone but is in keeping.

I ascended the steps and entered the Duomo, where the *coup d'œil* is very imposing, the pervading colour being that warm yellow tint so charming to the eye. The nave, and, in fact, the whole interior, is very graceful. It is one of those buildings one can neither call large nor small, from the admirable proportions of the whole, no inequality betraying the precise scale. Frescoes there are all over the roof, and a few choice pictures; one in particular, a Deposition by Baroccio, in a chapel near the door, painted, it is said, while he was suffering from poison given him, out of envy, at Rome. This picture has the usual visiting-card, common to all good paintings, of having made the journey to Paris.

Here, too, in a chapel, is preserved the veritable wedding-ring of the Virgin, which came, I suppose, flying through the air like her house at Loretto; also various other relics, all more or less fond of locomotion. In the sacristy, or winter choir, is a lovely picture, a Sposalizio by Luca Signorelli: in front of the figures is a tumbler of water with some carnations, painted with a delicacy of which only the old masters were capable.

The more I walked about, the more I was charmed with Perugia. Up and down we went, under old archways, and through narrow streets, each more quaint than the other. Whenever there was any opening, such views appeared—mountains tossed as if by an earthquake, deep valleys, great walls built on rocky heights, massive fortifications—all romantic beyond expression. We reached at last a plateau, called the Frontone, planted with trees, on the very edge of a stupendous cliff. The sun was just dissipating the morning mist over one of the grandest views on which the eye ever rested. Mountains, hills, rocks, of every shape and size, were piled one over the other, terrace-like; while to the right lay the blue Lake of Thrasymene, a calm and glassy mirror in the midst of chaotic confusion. High mountains shut in the view everywhere. In front, the rays of the sun were condensed into a golden mist,

obscuring all nearer objects. To the left lay a vast plain, fat and fertile, a land flowing with milk and honey. Before us uprose the city of Assisi, sparkling in the sunshine, seated on a rocky height, and also backed by lofty Apennines.

Close by stands the curious church of San Pietro, desolate and lonely. Its form is the perfect basilica: the space over the columned nave is covered with frescoes. In the sacristy are some fine pictures—delicate Sassoferratos, elegant Pinturiccios (an artist, by the way, one learns to esteem properly at Perugia), and some Peruginos that might well pass for the works of Raphael, so clear is the colouring and so admirable the drawing. One little picture of Christ and St. John as children, painted by Raphael in his youth, is very interesting. Pale and dirty as it is, the forms are exquisite.

After we left this church we walked up a hill so steep, I decidedly expected never to get my breath again. Then a magnificent view opened out before us—as there does, indeed, from every point along the city walls. At last we came to the Porta Augusta, one of the grandest monuments in the world. It is of immense size, and formed of uncemented stones actually gigantic; the walls of Fiesole are nothing to it. I cannot describe the solemn

majesty of this portal of unknown antiquity, frowning down on the pigmy erections of later ages. There it stands in glorious solidity until the day of judgment. Nothing short of a universal convulsion can shake it. Over the arch are the letters "Augusta Perugia," looking at a distance like some cabalistic charm. On the left are an open gallery and two massive towers. It actually looks quite awful, like something seen in a hideous dream.

Hard by is the College of the Belle Arti, full of the most curious Etruscan relics, in wonderfully fine preservation. Whole rooms are filled with stone tombs, small, of course, in size, for the Etruscans burned their dead, preserving only their ashes. All bear recumbent figures reposing on the lid. Vases, too, there are by hundreds; and a pillar in the centre of one room is marvellously preserved. In an upper gallery are a few pictures, but of no peculiar interest. Below, a lonely botanical garden, planted with laurels, lies—a spot in which to meditate on the strange destiny of a people capable of such wonderful achievements in the various branches of art, leaving not a vestige of their history to posterity.

But I was obliged to rush away without ceremony; and, taking a brusque leave of the Etruscan monuments, found myself suddenly in the *cinque-cento* Sala

del Cambio, which is covered with beautiful frescoes by Perugino. Here he depicted prophets, philosophers, and warriors, as well as the Nativity and the Transfiguration, in an odd jumble. I confess I was not much interested in this apartment, reserving all my admiration for the chapel beyond, where there are some exquisite frescoes by Raphael—sibyls and angels indescribably beautiful; beings such as he alone could create, floating amid the most exquisite arabesque ornaments and fanciful devices. The ceiling being low, one can entirely enjoy these charming works. Here also are paintings by Perugino and Spagnoletto; but all sink into insignificance beside the inspired pencil of the great master.

After seeing the paintings at Perugia, one can estimate the influence exercised by the Umbrian schools over Italian art generally. The demand for religious pictures; the fall of the Romanesque school, caused by the wars of the middle ages; the deplorable condition of Rome—the mistress of all civilisation—then degraded to a provincial city under the Eastern emperors, superinduced the progress of the Byzantine school all over Italy. Success in this branch of art required no creative genius, there being an accepted type for every subject, which it would have been scandalous not to follow. Art became

a manufacture, and was cramped and confined into certain patterns, without drawing, form, or nature. Painting was thus degraded to a mere tradition, until Cimabue, the Sienese Guido, Giotto, and their immediate followers—whom we may call Naturalisti, from their simple imitation of Nature, as distinguished from the Byzantine disregard for aught save servile copying—at last produced a more healthy tone, and gave an impulse in the right direction. But the naturalistic tendency of this school caused, in progress of time, a move in the opposite direction; and in opposition to the over-appreciation of Nature, and a tendency to represent the holiest mysteries under aspects too commonplace, arose the pietistic school of Umbria. Like the blessed Fra Angelico da Fiesole, these artists seem to have devoted their talents entirely to God, and to have made painting the subject of their most earnest prayers.

The retired and secluded position of Umbria, the small traffic her cities carried on beyond their own neighbourhood, the immediate vicinity of Assisi and her enthusiastic monks, followers of that mystical visionary, St. Francis, all tended to strengthen and develop this religious tendency. None can look at the paintings of Pietro Perugino, Sassoferrato, or Pinturiccio without perceiving their deep enthusiasm. They are, *par excel-*

lence, devotional pictures; the subjects are ideal in expression, and, although bearing the common human stamp, are entirely sanctified. This school reached its climax in Raphael, the pupil of Perugino, who created beings of another and a more celestial mould, around whom seemed to hover the very airs of heaven—beings too pure for either the passions or the temptations of humanity. Still, to a certain degree, this was a false tendency. What Raphael's powerful genius could command at pleasure sank with him, and soon became among his followers but tame and maudlin affectation. All that is not Nature must fall; and any school of painting, however admirable, not founded on this great principle, is fated to decay. Its very merit of extreme ideality and spiritualisation contains the germs of its destruction.

Even the most cursory view of the pictures at Perugia must verify these remarks, and show the peculiar characteristic of that school of which this city formed the centre. It would be easy to spend at least a week in this most interesting place, divided between the Etruscan antiquities, the exquisite scenery, and the paintings. I was extremely grieved to leave Perugia so soon, but there was no help for it. One church I must mention, San Dominico, which contains the grandest painted-glass windows in the choir I ever

beheld—the greens, and blues, and purples brilliant beyond expression. This is the only window I ever saw comparable to those three glorious sisters at Milan, where the whole Scriptures are depicted as in a magic mirror.

Supposing I have a *vetturino* who is not a *ladrone*—supposing I am not put to sleep in a room haunted with the shades of half the defunct crowned heads in Europe—and, finally, supposing the second Sicilian Vespers, prophesied by Mr. B—— so earnestly, do not take place and make the very streets run with priestly and aristocratic blood—supposing all this, I hope to visit Perugia again, and more at leisure.

The *vetturino* was at the door, and so was Mr. B——, who would not look at a single thing, being solely interested in the meat and the internal struggles of Italy. He was in a great hurry to be off, so in five minutes we were rattling through the gloomy old streets, out of the San Giovanni Gate on the road to Rome, down a tremendous descent. Fortunately for me, our driver drew up midway, about half a mile from the city, and insisted on our getting out to see a tomb called the Grotta de Volunni, forming part of the Etruscan necropolis of the city, accidentally discovered by a peasant digging for herbs in 1840. Let none pass by this tomb. There is nothing at Chiusi or else-

where to compare with it. We descended a long flight of steps to the entrance, once sealed by a block of stone. On the inner door-posts are plainly seen Etruscan letters in red paint, informing us that this was the tomb of Arnth and Larth Velimnas. We entered the tomb. The porous, drab-coloured clay is fresh as if cut but yesterday, and still bears the high polish produced by the friction of the instruments. Everything remains exactly in the same state as when the tomb was opened, excepting some small vases, lamps, and weapons, which are removed to a museum near. There are ten mortuary chambers, the first, and largest—twenty-eight feet long—containing seven urns resting on stone shelves, with recumbent figures on the top. These urns are of marble, most artistically sculptured: one of them bears both a Roman and Etruscan inscription. The ceiling is wonderful, sunk and panelled in squares, which are gathered in the centre around a Gorgon's head, terrifically natural, and sharp and clear in outline as though just finished. There are other sculptures equally startling; one a Medusa's head placed between two swords. There are also earthenware dragons and serpents on the walls, with horrible metal tongues that seem to hiss at one in the partial gloom. The other chambers are equally well preserved, but neither so elaborate nor so large.

It was a shame to see so wonderful and perfect a monument in a parenthesis, as it were. But so it was: we paused, exclaimed, admired, and fled; Mr. B—— loudly protesting against delay.

After about an hour's drive, a lofty church uprose before us: this was Santa Maria degli Angeli, the cradle of the great mendicant order founded by St. Francis. It is built over the original cell where he first felt those mystical inspirations to which he so strangely abandoned himself. Begging and mendicancy being inculcated as cardinal virtues by him and his followers, one could not be surprised that here both flourish gloriously. The moment our carriage stopped we were beset by about thirty men, women, and children of the most importunate description, who hovered about us like substantial gadflies. Never, even in Italy, did I see such boldness; they followed me into the church; pulled my sleeve, my hand, and all but laid violent hold upon me. As it was impossible to see anything until this crowd was disposed of, we came to a parley, declaring that we would distribute three francs among the whole, on condition of being afterwards unmolested. This was agreed to *nem. con.*, and Mr. B—— delivered over the money to a woman sitting at a small fruit-stall, who accepted the office. Around her they instantly clustered, and such a quarrelling,

screaming, and cursing began, as only Italians are capable of. One cried, another shrieked, then a couple of men began to fight, and, others joining, the affair seemed likely to end in a general *mêlée;* but as the fruit-seller stood her ground firmly, they all finally cooled down, and disappeared one by one into their respective lairs. This was the practical abuse of poor St. Francis's mendicant system, he who boasted he had never refused alms to a beggar in his life!

We now turned to contemplate the noble and spacious church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, raised by the faithful over the rustic cell where St. Francis loved to offer up his devotions. Originally it was a solitary cave, where he could retire unseen by every human eye, and abandon himself to those raptures which history scarce knows whether to denominate madness or ecstatic holiness. Here he passed days, nay, even weeks, rapt in the contemplation of heavenly beatitude. On this spot, therefore, uprose the grand church which now lends so noble a feature to the surrounding plain. This church is constructed so as to enclose his original chapel and cell within its walls. The interior is perhaps too bare, from the excessive whiteness and simplicity of the massive pillars; but its size is commanding, and a noble dome rises in the centre. The present building is modern, the original

church having been almost entirely destroyed in 1832 by an earthquake; which, however, respected the altar and cell of St. Francis—a circumstance his followers of course attribute to a miracle. That more sacred portion of the church is railed off and locked up. While waiting for the *sacristano,* who was at dinner, I again fell a victim to some straggling beggars in the church; especially to a woman in the pretty Romanesque costume, who pulled my cloak so perseveringly I was forced into attention. She informed me that, at the grand annual festa, ten or twelve thousand persons are frequently present, drawn from all the surrounding country by enthusiasm for the native saint. So immense, indeed, she said, was the crowd, that persons were frequently suffocated on these anniversaries. What the beggars must be on these solemn occasions I leave to the imagination of my readers; I confess myself quite at fault. At last the Franciscan brother appeared with the keys, and we entered the *penetralia* behind the screen. The deepest devotion was apparent in this man's deportment, as well as in that of others who chanced to pass us. He never mentioned the saint but in a whisper, at the same time raising his cap; and looked evidently with an annoyed and jealous eye at our intruding on the sacred precincts, heretics and unclean schismatics as we were. Near the grand altar is a small recess, where,

as I understood, St. Francis died: paintings cover the walls, and a lamp burns there perpetually. The brother seemed to look on the spot with such devotion, I could not trouble him by a too impertinent curiosity.

But the most interesting portion of the building is St. Francis's cell, outside the church, in a small court at the end of a long stone passage, now converted into a chapel. Under the altar there is a deep narrow hole, visible through bars of iron, where the saint performed his flagellations, and lay as a penance for hours and days without eating or speaking. The legend goes that the instrument of flagellation was the stem of a white rose-bush, growing in a little garden hard by (still existing), and that after his blood had tinged the broken branch the tree ever afterwards blossomed of a deep red. It is also added that a certain royal lady, within the last few years, procured a slip of this rose-tree, which, when transferred from its native soil, returned to the original colour, and became again a white rose.

As we were returning into the church, the entire brotherhood of nearly two hundred monks passed along the stone passage to the refectory, walking two and two, and singing. Their voices sounded hollow and melancholy as the chant echoed through the vaulted corridors. Their robes of brown serge, and their pale and downcast countenances, gave one a melancholy

impression of the order. The younger monks passed first, and the sacristan desired us ladies to conceal our dangerous faces behind the door; but the rear being brought up by aged and infirm brethren, who were considered well seasoned to like temptations, we were permitted to re-enter the passage into the church. These monks, I understand, fast to an extraordinary extent, and further exercise their self-denial by sitting for a long time repeating prayers, with their scanty food spread out before them, waiting until appetite be thoroughly conquered ere they allow themselves any nourishment.

St. Francis himself was by his life and character an exception to all ordinary rules. A man who voluntarily renounces parents, home, and the advantages of a good worldly position; who exposes himself to contempt and ridicule; and who from this lowly cell, where he began his impassioned career, finally gathers together more than one hundred and fifty thousand followers, is so singular an example of the force of religious enthusiasm and power of eloquence, that the usual string of arguments are at once silenced. The unflinching resolution with which this extraordinary man worked out his rules—inculcating that utter poverty and self-annihilation so repugnant to proud humanity—from the age of twenty-one years through a life of nearly half

a century, is an unanswerable proof of his sincerity. All the fervent enthusiasm of a glowing Italian nature, and the violent passions of a man born in the burning plains of the Romagna, were devoted in virgin purity to God. His deep humility, bordering on moral pusillanimity, joined to a matchless courage in the path of duty, form a singular and exceptional character. I confess I never could make up my mind as to the mystical part of his history. When I read the well-authenticated accounts of his receiving the *stigmata* — especially the minute description of the wound emitting blood, and the form of the nails —"black like iron"—I cannot but feel staggered at the evidence, and the impossibility of deceit from so pure a soul as that of St. Francis. The details of his body being raised in the air, sometimes to the height of the ceiling, during his pious raptures, are utterly incredible. It appears certain, however, that St. Francis bore in his body most extraordinary marks, which his own imagination and the belief of his followers magnified into miraculous *stigmata;* and that his fond affection and deep sympathy for the sufferings of our Saviour led him to prize these marks as a celestial visitation.

From the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, I could gaze up at the town of Assisi, grandly spread out

on a mountain-chain in front, about a mile distant. This celebrated convent of St. Francis runs out like a cape, as it were, into the plains below, apart from the town, and is supported on arched foundations eighty or a hundred feet high, fixed on the solid rock, visible from a great distance, and looking like piles of clustered pillars surmounted by a majestic palace. The effect is extremely imposing. Behind rises the city, crowned by an ancient ruined castle on a green hill; while beyond, and enclosing the whole, are lofty and finely-wooded mountains. Leaving our *vetturino* below, we hired a light *calesso*, and Mr. B—— and I proceeded towards Assisi. Mr. B—— was by no means a congenial companion; for he hates monks, and evinces little sympathy for mediæval art. We were straightway fastened to a couple of milk-white steers, to be dragged up the very steep acclivity on which Assisi stands, and, as the road was rough and stony, all further conversation was impossible.

As we approached, Assisi assumed a more and more singular appearance, commanding a magnificent view over the plain traversed by ancient aqueducts. Nothing can be more striking than the aspect of its half-ruined walls, battlements, and towers. The forsaken appearance of the streets makes it look more like a city of the dead than the living. One could easily believe

the whole place had gone to sleep after the great churches were built, and never woke up again.

Up and down two or three break-neck streets, and we enter the outer *cortile*, leading to the three separate churches into which the vast pile is divided. This *cortile* is on a level with the middle church. High above rises the upper church; while below the ground on which we stand is the lower one—the burying-place of St. Francis, excavated out of the solid rock on which the artificial supports for the superstructure are built. The *cortile*, surrounded by low arched cloisters, is desolate and grass-grown. We passed through a richly-sculptured pointed arch to the left into other cloisters, which are large and airy, and covered with half-obliterated frescoes. In the centre is a deep well, full of the most lively fish. After some delay, and many desperate efforts on the part of Mr. B—— to penetrate the recesses of various dark and interminable passages in the *Clausura*, or closed part, where I, as a woman, dared not follow, we at last laid violent hands on a Franciscan, and entreated him to show us the convent buildings.

First of all, he ushered us into the middle church, which, on the whole, is the finest and most interesting. There is a solemn, mysterious gloom about it, a "dim, religious light," that responds agreeably to one's pre-

conceived expectations. The roof is arched, and somewhat low; and the one long single nave, with a transept at either extremity, together with the side walls and chapels, are covered with the most curious frescoes. Some of the chapels were so dark that it was impossible to distinguish more than the general rich effect, but in others better lighted the paintings were fresh and brilliant, and of extreme beauty. Here are the three celebrated frescoes by Giotto, representing the virtues of Poverty, Obedience, and Chastity. Poverty appears as a woman given in marriage to St. Francis. She is a sweet feminine figure, quite clothed with thorns; in front are boys mocking her, while angels hover around. By her side stands the Saviour, who is joining her hand to that of the saint. Chastity is represented by a woman in a strong fortress, surrounded by angels and hosts of mailed warriors. St. Francis advances towards her, escorted by churchmen, and is in the act of driving away earthly or impure love. Obedience is more obscure—wrapped too deeply in emblematical allegory for me to interpret. Kugler says that tradition assigns the idea of these frescoes to Dante, who was, as appears from his "Commedia," an intimate friend of Giotto's. Every window in this beautiful church is of stained glass, so lending a fine glow to its somewhat faded magnifi-

cence. This very air of age and decay about the altar furniture, though harmonising with the general character of the place, surprised me much, when I considered the veneration in which these churches are universally held.

I bade a reluctant farewell to the beautiful frescoes, which would have afforded good study for many days to a lover of mediæval art; and I descend a double flight of stairs opening from the centre of the floor into the third or subterranean church. This, both in size and circular construction, recalled to me the chapel of San Carlo Borromeo, under the grand altar of the Duomo at Milan, only that the tomb of St. Francis is excavated out of the living rock. The monk and his acolyte lighted our darkness with huge torches. When visible, the third church, or rather chapel (for its size scarcely allows of calling it anything else), is very magnificent, surrounded by a double row of yellow porphyry columns, one range encircling the rugged rock, the other surrounding the outer wall. The burial-place of the saint, under the altar, was approached by the monk with the utmost respect; and had it not been for the withering presence of Mr. B—— (stern representative of the prejudices of the outer world) I think even I should have bent the knee before a shrine so endeared to the memories of the

whole Christian world. St. Francis expired in his cell at Santa Maria degli Angeli, below, but his remains are interred here, where the piety of the middle ages has raised this majestic monument of sculpture, architecture, and painting—the very harvest of the period—to his name.

A very long flight of dark stairs conducted us to the upper church, which we entered somewhat abruptly near the altar. This church, which I had expected to find very splendid, disappointed me. It is bare and bald compared with the gorgeously-frescoed walls beneath; and the full glare of day through lancet windows of plain glass appeared quite insufferable after the solemn-tinted half-light below. The light of day, which displeases me in any church, seemed peculiarly out of place in this sanctuary, reared over the grave of one who voluntarily shut out the outward light, and lived apart and alone, in strange and mystical communion with heaven. The altar wants magnificence. It is surmounted by some curious Gothic arches, and enclosed by a choir, with stalls of wood-mosaics of the most wonderful beauty and finish. Here are portraits of saints and fathers, lifelike in action and expression—and a head of the Virgin, with a drapery after the manner of Bellini, which struck me as one of the sweetest countenances I had ever seen.

Of these stalls there are one hundred and two; all the mosaic-work being executed by a monk of the convent named Fra Domenico di San Severino.

This upper church is also lined with frescoes, both on the walls and ceiling—the works of Cimabue and of Giotto. The ceiling is painted in alternate compartments of figures, with gold stars on a deep blue ground; but these frescoes were exceedingly injured by the French during their occupation of Assisi. They broke the windows, admitted the rain and damp, and damaged paintings till then fresh and bright after the lapse of so many centuries. Casting my eye around on the curious frescoes, where ignorance of the canons of art and consummate genius are quaintly visible, I was caught by one of the series containing St. Francis's life. He is represented ascending through the air to heaven in a monstrously awkward red car, little suited, certainly, for such an aërial voyage. It is shaped like the *carro* one sees commonly drawn by oxen; but this heavenly chariot is dragged over very material-looking clouds by a pair of fat Flemish horses, quite a match for the vehicle. St. Francis acts as the Jehu, holding his reins much after the style of Olympian Jove. Could he have conducted such a vehicle over infinite space, it would certainly have been the most extraordinary miracle

recorded in saintly annals. There is another fresco in the same series—both attributed to Giotto—where the saint is represented in a pretty garden, surrounded by trees and verdure, preaching to little birds grouped about him, or flying to him through the air in the utmost haste. There is some water, too, introduced, and the fishes' heads are visible, poked up with an air of the utmost attention towards St. Francis, who stands in a persuasive attitude with extended arms. I suppose a smile was visible on our countenances, for the monk laughed outright at the childish conceit, and indeed throughout manifested a very decided disposition to ridicule the extravagance of the saint's miraculous gifts. "*Ah,*" said he, "*è un' allegorià, tutta questa, non è la veritàà!*" which fact we scarcely required to be told. Everything connected with these paintings of Cimabue and Giotto is deeply interesting; but the more I looked, the more I was disappointed with the general garish air of the upper church, and its total want of grandeur. It is, however, considered a perfect model of Gothic architecture, which, in truth, I required to be told. We made our exit by the grand portal, where there is a large wheel window, in the centre of a majestic façade. We had entered below, on a level with the middle church; but, from the rapid rise of the acclivity against which the church is built,

we were still on a level with the ground. We emerged on a spacious, lonely, green piazza. Beyond were the time-worn, rusty-looking walls of the town.

Here, again, we fell victims to the beggars, who, hearing that a party of *forestieri* were exploring the churches, watched us round, and came out strong and fresh on the green turf. But for Mr. B——'s tall figure, and stern and somewhat morose countenance, which imposed respect, I should have been positively frightened lest the beggars in this solitary corner might have rapidly passed into brigands and robbed me. We selected from the group an intelligent lad as a guide to our carriage, which had gone a tour on its own account, and was nowhere visible. Up and down we trudged, through desolate, half-ruined streets, and under high walls, until I thought our guide himself was misleading us. At last we emerged on the grand piazza of Assisi, a wretched square, save and except for some noble Roman pillars and a portico fronting what once had been a temple of Minerva, now of course a church. The symmetry of this classical façade is exquisite. The columns are in a much finer state of preservation than the much-boasted Roman pillars of San Lorenzo at Milan, which were so carefully cared for by Napoleon. I wonder one does not hear more of this

beautiful temple, more perfect than anything at Rome, except the Pantheon.

Our *calèche* was in waiting, and we were soon rattling down the rapid descent from Assisi to Foligno, where our *vetturino* awaited us. As we descended, fine views over the plain beneath opened out from between the trees. The valley of the Tiber, which lay stretched out before us, is so richly cultivated as to be actually quite monotonous. Perugia was just visible in front, nobly crowning a height, encircled by rugged mountains. To the left lay Foligno and various other small towns, each town crested with dark cypresses or pine-trees. Behind towered Assisi, high up in the Apennines, crowned by its ruined fortress. After about two hours' most agreeable drive, we reached Foligno, from whence we returned by rail to Siena.

* * * * *

And with this excursion my Diary ends; for it was the last I was destined to make.

I am suddenly called back to England, and the "idle woman" (who was not so very idle, after all) has now laid aside her pen, and become once more the "woman of the period"—with really nothing to do!

THE END.

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